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PIOUS AFFECTIONS

By the Ven. NICOLAS LANCICIUS

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PIOUS AFFECTIONS
TOWARDS GOD AND THE SAINTS

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR
AND FOR THE PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS

From the Latin of the
VEN. NICOLAS LANCICIUS
OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

With Preface by
GEORGE PORTER
OF THE SAME SOCIETY

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TO THE READER.

The present volume is a reprint of that which appeared in 1874, *under the title of* MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR AND FOR THE PRINCIPAL FEASTS, *in* ST. JOSEPH'S ASCETICAL LIBRARY. *It has long been out of print. It will be followed immediately by a similar reprint of the* MEDITATIONS *of F. Avancinus, and of other works of the same standard character. The only alteration made in the present volume is that the title originally given to it by its Author has been restored.*

H. J. C.

London: Feast of St. Augustine of England, 1883.

PREFACE.

Father Nicholas Lancicius, or Lanczycki, was born at Nieswiesz, in Lithuania, about the year 1575. Whilst a mere youth, he renounced Calvinism, and at the age of seventeen entered the Novitiate of the Society of Jesus in Cracow. He passed through his studies in Rome, and was then named to assist Father Orlandini, at that time engaged in writing the history of the Society. The General, Father Claudius Aquaviva, showed the esteem in which he held him by naming him Spiritual Father and Confessor to the Roman College. Subsequently, Father Lancicius taught theology and Holy Scripture in the College of Wilna. From Professor he became Rector and Provincial; and at length died at the town of Kovno, in Lithuania, on the 16th of May, 1652.

His reputation rests mainly on his ascetical writings; they show the saint, the theologian, the scholar, and, above all, the child of St. Ignatius of Loyola, formed on the doctrine of the Spiritual Exercises.

The most complete edition of the writings of Father Lancicius is the one published at Antwerp, under the editorship of Father John Bollandus, in two folio volumes, in 1650.

The Meditations, of which an English translation is

now given to the public, were composed by Father Lancicius during the term of his first rectorate.

To some the meditations will appear too brief. Father Lancicius explains why he did not develope the matter more fully. He says he was guided by the direction of St. Ignatius, who wishes the meditation to be given accurately, with merely a brief and summary explanation of the points. St. Ignatius thought that the person meditating would thus be compelled to develope the points and reason on them by himself, and then, if he found—either by his own thought, or by the inspiration of grace—something leading to a fuller understanding of the mystery, he would derive greater relish and profit from it than if the matter had been developed to him by the director. For, adds the Saint, it is not the extent of knowledge, but the interior relish, which satisfies the craving of the soul.

In the Preface of the first published edition, which only appeared after the book had been in circulation in MSS. for nearly thirty years, he says he was induced to compose it by observing that some of his subjects did not succeed in their meditations, because they had not prepared them well. The want of preparation he attributed partly to the inexperience of beginners in the spiritual life, partly to a scarcity of books on the life of Christ, adapted for private meditation.

The preparation of the meditation comprises—(1) the determination of the fruit to be derived from it; (2) the arrangement of the preludes; and (3) of the number and the subject of the points. The fruit will depend somewhat on the subject-matter of the meditation, somewhat also on the spiritual condition of the

person making the meditation. The fruit of the meditation is the grace asked for in the last prelude, in which St. Ignatius instructs us, *petere id quod volo*, to ask for the grace I stand in need of. If the meditation is drawn from sin, its nature, its punishment, its effects, its causes, the fruit will be horror of sin; or of some particular sin; sorrow for past sins; hope of forgiveness; purpose of amendment; resolution of penance; renunciation of worldliness; fear of God's judgment; contempt of the world. If it be drawn from the life of Jesus Christ, the fruit will be greater knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, with increased desire of imitating Him, in general or in some particular virtue inculcated in His teaching, or set before us in His actions. If it be drawn from the Passion of Jesus Christ, the fruit will be compassion for my suffering Lord, sorrow for my sins, which have crucified Him, patience under all trials, love of the Cross. If it be drawn from the Glorious Mysteries, the fruit will be joy with Christ risen, unshaken confidence and hope in the promises of God, constancy and perseverance, desire of Heaven.

The same person, under different circumstances, may look for different fruits from the same meditation. The punishments of sin, at the beginning of a conversion, will awaken the fear of God; at a later period, the prevailing effect will be intense sorrow for past sins; or it may be a resolution to embrace a life of penance; or it may be, an all-absorbing sense of the mercy of God, *Misericordiæ tuæ quia non sumus consumpti*— "The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed."[1]

Again, a person may be exercising himself in the

[1] Lament. iii. 22.

Purgative Week, or in the Illuminative Week, or in the Unitive Week; and the preparation of the meditation cannot fail to be influenced by the particular stage of spiritual life which is being traversed.

The same incident in the life of our Lord may at one time suggest a lesson of humility, at another of obedience, at another of self-denial, at another of fidelity in the service of God, at another of constancy in prayer.

In one word, the fruit of the meditation is the lesson to be gathered from the subject under consideration, best suited to the actual circumstances of the soul, and to its most urgent spiritual needs.

The preludes in a meditation are two, in a contemplation three. For the sake of clearness, we will consider the preludes in the inverse order, beginning with the last. The last prelude is always, as has been said, a petition for the fruit of the meditation: O God, enlighten my understanding, inflame my will. Enlighten my understanding, that I may understand this truth, this lesson, this history. Inflame my will, that I may love this virtue, may abhor this sin, may love Jesus Christ. The next prelude is always the composition of place. The imagination should call up the scene of the historical event, or create a scene; in this scene I am to place myself, noticing the features of the spot, or the road, or the house; the position, dress, looks of the actors; partly to occupy the mind and prevent it from wandering, partly to enable it to recover itself more easily, if it should wander. Instances of the imaginary scenes occur in the Spiritual Exercises (First week, first Exercise); to

imagine the soul in this corruptible body, as it were shut up in a prison, and man himself driven into exile among the brute beasts. In the contemplation on the love of God, the first prelude is to place myself in the presence of God, the Angels, and all the Saints, who are ready to help me. Other instances may be to imagine myself kneeling at the feet of Jesus Christ and listening to His teaching, or standing on Mount Calvary, watching the moment of the separation of His Soul from His Body. These two preludes suffice in meditation; in contemplations there is another prelude, which is placed first, and it consists in briefly recalling the event which forms the subject of the contemplation.

The points in the meditation may be those given in the book; or new points may be chosen; the greatest liberty in this respect is left to each one; the meditation is to be his work; he is to fix the points, he is to determine the fruit he hopes to gather from his prayer, he is to turn the matter over in his mind; and the greater or less impression made on the will (the real permanent gain to be derived from prayer), must depend on the extent to which he has made the thoughts and arrangements of the meditation entirely his own.

For the instruction of those who are not accustomed to meditation, some questions on the preparation may here find a place.

1. Is the fruit of the meditation to be derived from each one of the three or four points? For instance, if the fruit is obedience, must obedience be the practical conclusion to be inferred from each of the

points of the meditation? or must it at least appear as a practical conclusion in one of the points?

Or the question is sometimes put in this form—Must the fruit of the meditation comprise all the practical conclusions drawn from each point? The answer will be that every practical conclusion arrived at in a meditation is in some sense a fruit of that meditation; grace to know and embrace such a conclusion may be properly asked for in the petition for the fruit of the meditation, in the second prelude. And when the points assigned for the meditation are totally independent of each other, it is better to arrange the second prelude in this manner.

But in a carefully-prepared meditation, the points will all be subordinate parts of a whole; a definite, distinct fruit will be suggested by the meditation, and this fruit naturally forms the object of the petition in the second prelude.

The end of meditation is to move the will; to draw it to good, to withdraw it from evil; the understanding is relied upon as the chief guide, under Divine grace, of the will; the preparation for the meditation, the points and the preludes, are only so many helps to favour the exercise of the three powers of the soul, and it matters little whether many fruits are asked for, or only one, provided the mind and heart be raised to God, and the fire of charity be kindled during the meditation. In the ordinary Providence of God, charity will be more easily and more effectually kindled if the meditation is judiciously divided, and a clear definite result proposed to the mind; but even where less method and order prevails,

the grace of the Holy Ghost may supply the place of natural power of thought and reflection.

2. What number of points ought to be decided on in the preparation of the meditation?

St. Ignatius says that each one must conjecture how many he is likely to want. We are, however, safe in saying that for half an hour's meditation, two points are amply sufficient; for an hour's meditation, three or four. The object of preparing so many points, is to be provided with matter to occupy the time. If from the first point considerations, affections, and resolutions can be drawn for an hour, it is needless to proceed to the second point. To enlighten the understanding, to inflame the will with the love of God, is the end of all meditation; if this end be attained in one point, one point suffices, and we ought not to travel further; if the first point fails to impart the light or the fire, the second may prove more powerful. Or, if the first point is exhausted, the second may engage the attention; when the second is exhausted, the third and fourth remain.

3. Is it advisable often to ask for the same fruit in one's meditation, or is it better to think of a different fruit for each day?

As the meditation is the raising of the mind and heart to God, and as the mind and heart ought to be guided to certain definite aims in spiritual life, it follows that the faults chiefly to be guarded against, and the virtues chiefly to be aimed at, will frequently be the fruit asked for in the meditation; nay, the subject of the Particular Examen, the subject to which the main attention is directed, will probably, if we are

working earnestly, in one shape or another appear in every meditation.

4. In contemplating the life of Jesus Christ, would it be enough to ask in the third prelude for the grace to know and love Jesus in general, without specifying any particular virtue of His life?

The love and imitation of Jesus Christ in general might properly be the fruit of a meditation or contemplation; to acquire a feeling of deep attachment and loyalty to Jesus Christ, to make His life the standard and rule of our life would be a most suitable object for a meditation. But, when contemplating any particular event of His life, or meditating the lessons He taught, it might be safer, especially in the early years of spiritual life, to define more exactly our desire of imitation by fixing before the mind one or other of His virtues; to strive to know and love our Blessed Lord as meek and humble of Heart, as obedient to Joseph and Mary, as doing the will of His Father, as exhibiting a model of some special virtue, and in so doing challenging us to imitate Him.

5. Should a point present itself during meditation not selected in the preparation, and perhaps only indirectly connected with the fruit proposed, ought this thought to be followed up, or ought it to be put aside? For instance, in a meditation on the Washing of the feet of the disciples, the thought presents itself that my soul is sadly defiled with sin; shall I leave this thought or follow it up?

No rule can be laid down. Sometimes such unforeseen reflections, occurring during meditation and dwelt upon, stir the soul to its very depths, and to repress

them always would be to deprive oneself of very precious lights and very precious desires and resolutions. In the life of St. Ignatius it is stated that he frequently felt himself thus carried away by some point which had not presented itself during the preparation of his meditation. However, novices in the use of prayer would incur some danger if they accustomed themselves to abandon lightly or frequently the line of thought they had determined on in their preparation. The use of preparation is plainly to guide the efforts of the soul during the time of meditation; carefully to prepare the meditation and then systematically or very frequently to abandon the preparation would be rash and presumptuous.

6. Should the preparation of the meditation extend to the determination of the practical conclusions to be drawn from each point?

The answer to this question must be in the negative; the drawing of practical conclusions is a portion of the meditation, it is part of the raising of the mind to God; it should be done during the meditation. And on the same principle, when spiritual writers recommend that the mind should be occupied with the subject of meditation during the interval between preparation and retiring to rest, and again during the time of rising and dressing in the morning, the meaning is that other thoughts, and especially distracting thoughts, should be excluded; that the mind should be kept in a frame or tone, as far as possible, in harmony with the meditation; but it is not meant that the meditation should be commenced.

Thus, St. Ignatius, in his second Addition, recom-

mends for the Exercise on Sin, that whilst dressing we should recall the subject of the meditation, and then excite ourselves to a feeling of shame and confusion, instituting comparisons, as of a soldier on his trial for cowardice and treachery, a criminal in the presence of his judge. For the meditations on the Life of Christ, he would have us, after recalling the subject of the meditation, to excite in our hearts a great desire to advance in the knowledge of the Eternal Word made Man for us, that we may be moved to follow Him and serve Him more faithfully.

These brief remarks on the preparation of the meditation may properly be closed with the three first Additions of St. Ignatius.

The *first* is, "After lying down to rest, before falling asleep, I must consider, during the space of an *Ave Maria*, at what hour I intend to rise, and for what purpose, making a *resumé* of the meditation I have to go through;" or as the *Versio Autographa* has it, "briefly passing over in my mind the points of the meditation to be made."

The *second* is, "When I wake I must turn my mind to the exercise I am about to make, not allowing any other thoughts to enter."

The *third* is, "I must stand, during the space of a *Pater Noster*, at one or two paces from the spot at which I am going to pray, with my mind raised up, considering how God our Lord looks down upon me, and I must perform some act of reverence and humiliation."

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PART I.

MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

Of the Judicial Office of the Messiah.

1. Consider that the expected Messiah is to be our Judge—"For neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son."[1] "It is He, Who was appointed by God to be Judge of the living and of the dead."[2] Inasmuch, therefore, as we are to be judged by Him, and are conscious of many sins which will be matter for His judgment, it behoves us to prepare for His advent, that He may be so received, so treated by us, may be so drawn towards us and appeased, that, in judging us, He may not condemn but absolve us. Ponder, then, how you should receive Him, in order to attain this end.

2. Consider the pomp wherewith this Judge shall judge us when He comes. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved. And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty, and they shall gather together His Elect from the four winds."[3] All which things will be instruments to strike fear, yet not into the friends but into the enemies of the

[1] St. John v. 22. [2] Acts x. 72.
[3] St. Matt. xxiv. 29-31.

Judge. It will be your task, lest you have to fear this pomp of the Judge, to take now good heed, that you may be found among His friends and Elect. Consider then what is needful, and strive to obtain it.

3. Consider the manner of the coming Judgment. All people being gathered before Him with the sound of the trumpet, "He will separate the sheep from the goats, and He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on His left."[4] Do you examine thoroughly whether there be in you the qualities of the sheep or of the goat, and, that you may be a sheep, look well to your actions.

4. Consider the final sentence of the Judgment. He will say first to the sheep, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; naked and you covered Me. As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren you did it to Me." But to the goats He will say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat," &c.[5] Ponder each of these words according to the third method of prayer, eliciting pious affections of grief, of supplication, of thanksgiving, and the like, with purpose of amendment.

[4] St. Matt. xxv. 32, 33. [5] St. Matt. xxv. 34.

MONDAY.

The Messiah will be the Lamb.

1. Consider that the expected Messiah is the "Lamb slain from the beginning of the world;"[6] that is to say, the Lamb Whose future death was to be profitable towards the salvation of all men who have existed from the beginning of the world till now, for whatever good they possessed which led them towards life eternal they have drawn from the merits of His death. Return thanks, therefore, for so wonderful a fountain of good things, so speedily opened to men. Consider how great and how many are the good gifts these holy ancients have drawn therefrom, and kindle in your heart a lively hope of attaining yourself yet more good gifts, now that the Lamb has been actually slain, and long for His advent in the flesh.

2. Consider the pre-eminent office of the Lamb that is to come, announced by His precursor in these words—"Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sins of the world."[7] Joyful tidings! For what is more to be desired by the sinner than to have One by Whom his sins may be taken away? Having called to memory your sins, with tender affection of shame and grief, offer them to the Eternal Father, and pray Him to send this Lamb to blot them out, and to commend thee to this Lamb, that you may never be deserted by Him, but obtain deliverance from your so many sins.

3. Consider the meekness of the Lamb that is to come, Who, when persecuted in word and deed by

[6] Apoc. xiii. 8. [7] St. John i. 29.

His enemies, and conducted to His death, "as a lamb opened not His mouth," [8] that He might give thee an example of patience, and that His patience might merit a remission of thy sins. Consider, therefore, how you shall imitate Him; grieve that you do not imitate Him; and purpose amendment.

4. Consider the attendants of this Lamb in the heavenly palace, in Whose sight stand innumerable men of all peoples and tongues, "who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb . . . Who shall rule them, and shall lead them to the fountains of the living waters of life, so that they shall neither hunger nor thirst any more." [9] Consider those among them who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; [10] those, that is who have preserved their virginity inviolate. Be inflamed with an ardent desire that you may follow this Lamb as closely as possible, and receive His greatest favours in Heaven. Beg this from the Father of the Lamb, and on your part cooperate with the grace of God.

TUESDAY.

The Messiah will be our Advocate.

1. Consider the necessity there is that you should have an advocate favourable to you in Heaven, by whose aid you may obtain those things of which you stand in need in this life, whether for the remission of sins, or for preservation from evil, or for acquiring

[8] Isaias liii. 7.

[9] Apoc. vii. 14, 17. [10] St. Matt. xiv. 4.

any other graces. To procure these will be the office of the coming Messiah. Long, therefore, for His advent, that you may experience His aid as soon as possible.

2. Consider the excellence of this Advocate. He will be all powerful in obtaining all things necessary for you, because He is supremely acceptable to the most Blessed Trinity, from Whom are obtained all things that should be cared for. Moreover, He has the right to ask for, yea, to distribute, all the gifts which the most Blessed Trinity deigns to bestow on men, and in His intercession He will intercede most ardently, because He will do most perfectly whatever He undertakes. One thing, therefore, is for you most necessary—that He be willing to discharge the office of your Advocate. That He may be so, consider what it behoves you to do, that when He comes He may hold you dear to Him, and may love you effectually.

3. Consider the integrity of this Advocate, Who will not contrary to justice exercise the office which He has undertaken out of charity, nor be bribed by gifts to defend any unrighteous cause. Therefore, although He can do so much in the Heavenly Court, be careful that you have recourse to His patronage in a just cause. It will be just whenever with your whole heart you seek His aid with the Divine Majesty, having a serious determination not to offend Him by those sins for whose remission you require the aid of this Advocate. See, therefore, whether there be in you this will, this aversion from all sin; not a will only of words, but of deed and effect. If you have it not, strive for it without delay.

4. Consider the price demanded of you by this Advocate—no other than that you repeat not the sins whose pardon He will obtain, and that the good things He will beg for you be used well, for the praise of God and for a sweet savour to Him, and that you may be agreeable to Him. See if you do this, and what you do not now, strive to do in future.

WEDNESDAY.

The Messiah is the Head of the Body of the Church.

1. Consider the causes for which the desired Messiah is the Head of the Church, for He is the Superior and Chief of the Church. Hence, as says the Council of Trent, "As the head into the members, He continually infuses into the just a virtue which always precedes, accompanies, and follows their good works."[11] Hence it follows that Christ is to be reverenced as our Head, and that the vigour which He infuses into His members is not to be rejected. See how it is with you, and having returned thanks for this benefit, beg of Him to communicate Himself to you by the copious influx of His grace.

2. Consider the wonderful benignity of our Head, Who esteems good Religious as the apple of His eye, "He who shall touch you touches the apple of My eye."[12] For which, having returned Him thanks, examine whether you behave as the apple of the eye, not alone of the divine eye, but of the human eye, which shuns the sight of an unclean

[11] Sess., Cap, xvi. [12] Zach. ii. 8.

thing, and bears not without pain even the touch of a hair. So may you learn to turn with horror from earthly desires, and from all things leading to sin or connected with sin.

3. Consider your duty towards this Head; for as all the members expose themselves to peril lest the head should suffer, so must it be with you. When, therefore, you see or hear anything displeasing to Christ your Head, or which in some way spiritually injures Him, why do you not fight against it? Nay, rather, why do you often, through human respect, help the enemy and make yourself the companion of those who break His laws? Why have you more regard for some vile member, than for Christ your Head? Blush, pray for pardon, and strive to avoid such companions.

4. Consider what should be your integrity and sanctity in all your members, for if your Head is so near, and also so holy, how shall the members dare in His presence to commit anything worthy of blame? If the Head for His members suffers painful and bitter things, why shall not the members for the sake of that Head suffer the same? Blush, therefore, to be an impure and luxurious member, one not conformed to your Head, and strive to be as like Him as you can.

THURSDAY.

The Messiah is a Fountain.

1. Consider that the expected Messiah is an inexhaustible Fountain, by reason of His infinite and immense Divinity, and by reason of His Humanity,

wherein are merits of infinite value, capable of saving innumerable worlds, and of washing away infinitely more sins than have been committed by you. Ponder deeply upon this, and exult in the possession of so ample and unfailing a good prepared for you, and take heed that you can gain admittance to this Fountain, that you draw from its waters and profit by them.

2. Consider that there are seven pre-eminent springs from whence flow the salutary waters of this Fountain, namely, the seven Sacraments, from whose waters the soul, though more dead than a corpse, draws life, and if living, grows, and increases until it attains everlasting life. Meditate on the virtue of this Fountain and of these waters, admire the liberality and efficacy of the Fountain, and our facilities for making use thereof. Therefore return thanks, and examine how you draw these waters—with what affection, in what abundance, with what fruit—and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

3. Consider the other innumerable rivulets through which the waters of divine gifts flow from this celestial Fountain into your soul. These rivulets are supernatural operations, innumerable operations independent of the Sacraments, which either dispose you to grace when you are without it, or increase it in you. And here contemplate with amazement the mercy of God, Who opens to you so many ways of salvation. Give thanks from the depths of your heart; grieve that you draw such good things so scantily; and amend.

4. Consider the reasons why, though drawing water for so many years, by so many means, from this salutary Fountain, you perceive your soul to

make but little if any growth in purity of heart, that is, in the diminishing your sins, also in the beauty and lustre produced by virtue, when even your body is washed by water from impurities, and is immediately rendered clean. Having mourned over these causes, strive to remove them.

FRIDAY.

The Messiah is a Flower.

1. Consider that the Messiah is a Flower, on account of the sweet odour which He diffuses, like that of an odoriferous flower. This odour represents the perfect life which flourished among the first Christians, of whom the Apostle says, "For we are the good odour of Christ." [13] Meditating here on the principal interior and exterior actions of Christ with a tender affection, as of spiritual taste and smell, behold what a grateful odour they exhale before God, before the Angels, and before men; then turning to yourself, consider what kind of odour God perceives to come from you, especially from your prayers and words. And having mourned over your defects, kindle within yourself a desire of imitating this Flower, that God may say of you, "Behold, the smell of my Son is as the smell of a beautiful field, which the Lord hath blessed." [14]

2. Consider the Messiah as a Flower more excellent than all others through His medicinal virtue. First, everything in Christ possesses a salutary power of healing, His words, His touch, His

[13] 2 Cor. ii. 15. [14] Gen. xxvii. 27.

spittle, the hem of His garment, His death itself. Secondly, this virtue availed not only in expelling one disease, but all diseases. Long, therefore, eagerly for the coming of this salutary Flower, and when it is given to you in its abundance, especially in the most Blessed Eucharist, learn to profit by it, and to draw all goodness into yourself, for the cure of your diseases, and for the adornment and refreshment of your soul.

3. Consider the reasons why you do not experience the healing of your infirmities after so frequent a use of this Flower, when by the use of less excellent medicines, your bodily ailments are dispelled. And having discovered these reasons, weep over them before your Lord and strive to remove them.

4. Consider the reasons why this Flower is called, not flower of the garden but of the field; reasons you may discover on examining the difference between a garden and a field. Draw out holy affections from this consideration, and apply them to the amendment of your actions.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Ave Maris Stella.

1. Consider how truly this lower world is called a sea, comparing the tempests, horrors, confusion, warfare of the fishes, dangers and misfortunes occasioned by the sea, with all the evils resembling them in the world, and draw from them these two sentiments: first, gratitude towards God, Who has snatched you out of all these evils by your call to

Religion; secondly, great care regarding your life, lest you be submerged, almost in port, amid the worldly temptations which harass even those in Religion. Be warned by the shipwreck of so many careless Religious.

2. Consider how, in a contrary and good sense, the Religious state may be called a sea, because, as the sea casts up dead bodies, so Religion rejects the bad and incorrigible; and how it may also be called the Red Sea, if you compare the spiritual properties of Religion with the properties of the Red Sea, by means of which God saved the Israelites. Return frequent thanks to God for having called you to this state; 'pray Him ever to wash away your stains in its waters, and to bear you securely to the haven of eternal bliss.

3. Consider how the Blessed Virgin is Star of the Sea to men who are living in the world, on whom she spiritually confers many benefits (which you shall enumerate and consider), that resemble the benefits conferred on man by the light, power, influence, and motion of the stars, which benefits you yourself have experienced while in the world. Return thanks for them; pray her not to cease conferring them, and beg her also to call as many as possible, and those the most suitable, and to guide them to the haven of Religious life.

4. Consider how the Blessed Virgin is Star of the Sea to your Order, calling to memory the benefits she conferred on your Founder, and on other Saints of it, as well as on some others among its members, calling them into it sometimes by miracle, delivering them in it from temptations and sins, enlightening their understandings, exciting their

wills to hatred of sin and love of virtue, and also in other manners; for which return thanks, and beg her to make you shine like a star in the glory of Heaven.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

The Messiah is the Arm of God.

1. Consider how justly the Messiah is called the Arm of God, because by Him, as God, God the Father created all things for your sake, that you may use them, not merely as helps in your manifold needs, but also for your adornment, delight, and recreation. Meditate on the liberality of God and of this Arm, Who has made so many things for your gratification which were not essential to your life and being. Thank Him with the deepest gratitude, and see if you make use of the things created by this Arm according to the good pleasure of your God, as He created them to your taste. If it be not so, be sorry for it, beg pardon, and strive to amend.

2. Consider the power of this Arm in restoring those things which He created, and which the sins of men have destroyed. For hence, as He said to the disciples of John, by Him, "the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear,"[1] and others have received divers benefits. Since, then, God, by this powerful Arm, feeds you so often in the Blessed Eucharist, exult that you are a sharer of so many good things; show Him the miseries of your nature, and so act as to experience the fruits of His power.

[1] St. Luke vii. 22.

3. Consider the persevering liberality of this Arm in bestowing the supernatural gifts of grace. From It all the Saints from the beginning of the world have received everything that they possessed; the Martyrs their constancy, the Virgins their purity, the Confessors their sanctity of life and the like. Inasmuch as you so often feel the touch of this Arm, especially in Holy Communion, why is it that you receive no new gift from It? Think over this; and having discovered the obstacles which keep from you the liberality of this Arm, strive to remove them.

4. Consider the vigilance of this Arm shown forth in the defence of His own from the many attacks of their enemies, that they may not fall, but rather, may gloriously triumph. Since, then, this Arm is omnipotent, and close at hand to help you, why do you suffer yourself to be vanquished by trifling temptations, easy to overcome, of anger, or concupiscence, or sloth, or negligence? Think over this with sorrow, and draw near to taste of this, the Arm of God, prepared for you in the Holy Table, that you may for the future experience all Its power and liberality.

MONDAY.

The Messiah is a Victim.

1. Consider how justly the Messiah is called a Victim offered to God in the odour of sweetness, and how in Him everything whatsoever, whether it be substantial or accidental, or connected only with His transitory acts, has ever been diffusing a most

grateful odour before God. Compare your actions with His, and seeing the dissimilarity, blush, weep, and amend.

2. Consider the first manner wherein Christ our Lord was a Victim; a sacrifice, namely of satisfaction for your sins and those of the whole world, by the oblation of His death on the Altar of the Cross. Admire the goodness of God in devising such a sacrifice for you; praise Him, offer Him your most ardent thanks; detest your sins which needed Christ's death to satisfy for them; and conceiving a holy hatred against yourself, excite within yourself a burning desire of satisfying God by good works for your sins.

2. Consider the second manner wherein Christ was a Victim, namely, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the divine blessings; a sacrifice truly offered, and with exceeding affection, precious beyond all other sacrifices, being the Soul and Body of Christ, and His merits, which are of infinite value. Consider briefly, yet not without tender meditation, the many benefits of God towards you, and offer to the Divine Majesty this most sacred Victim as a thanksgiving. None better can be found; and since this your offering is infinitely perfect, beg of God a recompense equal to the gift you offer, namely the gift of divine grace.

4. Consider the third manner wherein Christ was a Victim, namely, as a sacrifice of praise; for by Him, and by all His actions, as well as by His Passion, the highest honour was offered to God, so great was the perfection, so great the sanctity inherent in them. Here contemplate the excellence of this abundant praise: admire it, taste it with an

interior relish, and excite in yourself an ardent desire to perform your interior and exterior actions in such a manner, that from them also may proceed the highest possible praise and worship of the Divine Majesty. Beg earnestly of God to grant you this, and offer yourself to Him with this most sacred Victim.

TUESDAY.

The Messiah is an Image.

1. Consider the first manner wherein Christ the Lord our Messiah, is an Image. As Son by nature, He is the Image of the Eternal Father from all eternity, and the figure of His substance,[2] from Whom He proceeds as the Word. Turn the eyes of your mind to this Eternal Image, considering the love of God the Father, Who from eternity prepared for you this most beautiful object, which when you shall behold It in the Beatific Vision after death, will give you incomparably more joys than your bodily eyes now receive in beholding a beautiful and bright image. Burn then with love towards the Divine Majesty Who has been from eternity so solicitous for your good, that you may learn to return love for so much love; and be careful to promote His good pleasure and glory in thyself and others.

2. Consider the second manner wherein Christ as Man is an Image. He is the Image of the Father in His rational Soul, endowed with natural and supernatural gifts, and pourtraying the Divine perfections and virtues wherewith, as so many colours,

[2] Heb. i. 3.

the Blessed Soul of Christ was adorned. Compare your soul with the Soul of Christ, and examine how far the image of God in you resembles God and the Image of Christ. Having seen the disfigurement of this image within yourself, blush, mourn, and strive to destroy all things which have stained it, and to adorn it with as many virtues as you can.

3. Consider the third manner wherein Christ is an Image. He is an Image for men, to whom He is offered as an ideal and a model, which all who would be saints must resemble. Go over, therefore, the principal actions of Christ, wherein is depicted the model of His most holy life. Admire their beauty: conceive a great esteem for the holiness of Christ, with a desire of copying this Image, inasmuch as you are one of His members.

4. Consider how you imitate in your actions the Image of Christ; comparing your actions with His. This will give you matter for shame and grief, and will point out the principal means whereby you may be rendered most like to Christ, and become as it were an image of Him on earth. Such were those great saints who were formerly the images of Christ, some of whom even bore a miraculous resemblance to His Face, as St. Catherine of Sienna; or were crucified with Him, as were certain Cistercians.

WEDNESDAY.

The Messiah is a Master.

1. Consider the excellence of this Master; greater than all masters, if you look at the high and copious

source from whence His teaching is derived, the end for which He received it, the method by which He delivered it, and the infallibility of the Teacher. Hence it is just, that you submit yourself to Christ the Teacher, and listen to Him with no less readiness than that with which you believe any very learned man, teaching you things of the highest importance, which you know to be well understood by him.

2. Consider the doctrine which this your Master delivered from Heaven through His Patriarchs and Prophets before His advent in the flesh, and what good disciples He then had, who taught that doctrine by their actions—as Moses, Abel, Joseph, Abraham, Elias, Eliseus, Ezechias, the seven Machabees with their mother, Tobias, Job, and others; and see if you, who should be better and more learned than they, from being under the New Testament, "which is established on better promises," [3] are not, on the contrary, inferior to them. Consider the exalted virtues of those disciples of Christ, which virtues ought to be so much the more conspicuous in you as you have greater incentives to them. Blush thereat, and amend.

3. Consider the teaching of this Master when in the flesh, and the means by which He delivered it: by example and word, living and dying, teaching and speaking, at home and abroad; and calling to memory some of His doctrines, see whether you believe them. You do believe if you show His teaching in your actions. Ponder these doctrines with all your power: "Strait is the way that leads to life, and few there are that find it." [4] "If any

[3] Heb. viii. 6. [4] St. Matt. vii. 14.

man hate not his own life, he cannot be My disciple."[5] "Many are called, but few are chosen."[6] "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."[7] "In your patience you shall possess your souls."[8]

4. Consider the circumstances of the Teaching of Christ; when He began to teach, how long He taught, in what places, whether with any kind of embellishment, with what intention, and similar circumstances, such as we are wont to take into account in the study of worldly science. Gather from them all some lessons for the amendment of your life.

THURSDAY.

The Messiah is our Physician.

1. Consider the expected Messiah as our Physician, by reason of His Divinity; for that Divinity is the chief fountain of all good, and of all the remedies that can be applied to the healing of our souls and bodies; an inexhaustible fountain containing many more remedies than there are diseases among perverse and wicked men. As then you are indisposed, or at least liable to many ills, rejoice at the coming of so powerful a Physician; long for Him and prepare to receive Him; and in the meantime show all your diseases to the Eternal Father, praying that they may be effectually cured by the coming Messiah.

[5] St. Luke xiv. 26.
[6] St. Matt. xx. 16.
[7] St. Luke xiv. 11.
[8] St. Luke xxi. 19.

2. Consider the Messiah as a Physician, by reason of His Humanity; since by His actions and His Passion when in the flesh, He merited for you all those needful medicines that were derived from the fountain of His Divinity. Excite, therefore, within yourself a tender affection to the Humanity of Christ, which offers you all divine gifts; esteem yourself happy in being able to receive Him so often in the Blessed Eucharist, and strive to obtain therefrom fruits worthy of so great a Physician.

3. Consider the manner wherein this Heavenly Physician applies the remedies to your diseases. With no other medicine or ointment than the Blood drawn out of His own Body on the altar of the Cross. "By Whose stripes," says St. Peter,[9] "you are healed." What father ever had so much affection for his son, that he opened his veins and poured out his life for him? And what blood, what life can be compared to the Blood and Life of Christ? Look with amazement at so stupendous a benefit, and strive to love Him in return with a most ardent love.

4. Consider what He requires from you that you may obtain the benefit of this medicine. He demands two things—(1) that you make worthy use of the Sacraments, especially those of Penance and the Holy Eucharist; (2) that with a conscience free from mortal and deliberate venial sin, you should habitually perform good and supernatural works. Examine if you do this, and with what diligence, and correct what is amiss.

[9] 1 St. Peter ii. 24.

FRIDAY.

The Messiah is a Stone.

1. Consider the Messiah to be the living Stone, so called by St. Peter;[10] truly a Stone, because He is the chief foundation of the Church, supporting her lest she should suffer anything from the gates of hell; and truly a living Stone, because He is the foundation of the living Church, namely, His Faithful, to whom He communicates the strength of spiritual life, bestowing on them gifts of grace, through whose use they grow in spiritual life. Return thanks to God that you are a member of this Church, built upon this Corner-stone; pray that you may never be removed from this building, and see how you profit by the life-giving influx of gifts which God communicates to you. This you will know by the growth and increase you perceive in your life and spiritual progress.

2. Consider yourself to be a stone built upon this Corner-stone, and that of you and the rest of the Faithful is constructed the edifice of the Church. Here reflect upon the qualities necessary to a stone, that it may add strength to the building and not expose it to risk. It must be entire; it must adhere to the other stones; it must not move from its place, nor seek to be raised higher. Apply these things spiritually to yourself, and see that you correct what needs correction.

3. Consider that this Corner-stone was rejected by the Jews, who formed the ancient building of

[10] 1 Epist. ii. 4.

the Synagogue; but now in the building of the Gentile Church is made the Head of the corner. If, therefore, God Himself, appearing in the form of a servant, was rejected for your sake by His creatures, by Princes, Priests, and statesmen, why should you be disturbed, if, not for God's sake, but for your own sins, you be despised, or have anything to endure from men? For this great Stone is infinitely more excellent than you are, and your daily venial sins deserve yet greater punishment.

4. Consider that this Stone is to many a stumbling-block and a rock of scandal—(1) to those who do not believe in Him; and (2) to those who believe in Him in theory but not in practice; that is, who follow not His counsels and His commandments, who care far less for the eternal rewards promised and prepared by Him than for the petty consolations of the world. See if you be among this number, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Dei Mater Alma.

1. Consider the excellence of the Blessed Virgin, which arises from this, that as Mother of God she is, as it were, a thing of God, something belonging in a peculiar manner to God. On this same account many things of the Old Testament, even such as were devoid of reason, possessed an inherent excellence, and were sometimes objects of veneration. Call to memory that spot where appeared the bush that burned without being consumed (where God would not allow even Moses to tread with shoes on

his feet), the ark of God, the tabernacle of the covenant, the vessels of the sanctuary, the altars, the holy of holies, and the mountain whereon God spoke and gave the law to Moses. Having considered all these wonderful things, and compared them with the excellence of the Blessed Virgin, gather therefrom some spiritual fruit, partly in admiration and praise of this Virgin, and partly for the amendment of your life.

2. Consider the excellence of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin, by reason of her Child, Who is true Man and true God, and the Creator of His Mother. With regard to this Son, consider with what dignity she was endowed, calling to memory the greatness of those holy men who were named in Scripture men of God, servants of God, friends of God, sons of God, not such by nature as was the Son of Mary, but made such by adoption and by justifying grace. If therefore they, from the fact that they belonged to God, had great gifts and performed such wonders, with what far higher gifts must the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of such a Son, have been endowed ; what far greater things did she perform, or might she have performed, had she so willed and had it been necessary. Here break forth into her praises, and into the praises of God, Who has so enriched her ; return Him thanks for such liberality towards His Mother, and pray her to bestow on you some of the crumbs which fall from her table, for the profit of your soul and body.

3. Consider the manner in which the most Blessed Mary was made Mother of God: (1) without the operation of any other creatures, (2) with the preservation of her virginity, (3) by a peculiar influx of

the Holy Spirit, supplying what was wanting of the ordinary laws of maternity, (4) without any of the troubles which precede and follow ordinary maternity. Hence with a clear spiritual glance, consider how God willed His Son, born in the flesh of a most holy Virgin, to be so pure that not even the outward stains of human frailty and infirmity should be admitted in His conception and birth, even though this could have been accomplished without any stain of sin—nay, even with very high merit, and this, although in all other circumstances and miseries He permitted this same Son to be humbled and unworthily treated. See here what purity God requires of us, and how He wills that we should avoid even the most remote appearance of all impurity, when He required that His Son should possess so much of even exterior purity. Be ashamed; humble yourself most deeply; weep over your stains and manifold impurities. Observe diligently what things for the future you have most to fear, and fly from them.

4. Consider the rights which the Blessed Virgin has over us, from being the Mother of God. She requires from us, as Mother of God, obedience and love, and both in a higher degree than any other creature, because in her Maternity and in the greatness proceeding therefrom she surpasses all others. Consider, therefore, whether you venerate the Mother of God with this homage both in private and in public, on all occasions which present themselves; and whether with a loving affection you do all that lies in you to recognize her greatness and the rights she has over you. Weep for all that is amiss, and strive to amend.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

The Messiah is One Crying in the Desert.

1. Consider how truly St. John the Baptist, in speaking to the Jews, called the Messiah "One crying in the desert," [1] for when at the age of thirty years He began to appear in public, He spent the rest of His life without intermission in preaching the doctrines of the Gospel: not fixing Himself in one place, but going about to many towns and cities, preaching His doctrine to all kinds of men, with great power and efficacy in His words. Whence you, who would be a follower of this Messiah, may learn not to give yourself to idleness or hide yourself in corners, but to spend your whole life, when you are devoted by your Superiors to the assistance of souls, in spreading abroad all necessary doctrines, whether in schools or churches, or elsewhere. Having considered the utility of this for your own sake, and its necessity for the sake of the world, ardently desire the work.

2. Consider the occasions wherein He Who cried in the desert, called with a loud voice. (1) Having related the parable of the seed scattered by the wayside, on rocky ground, and among the thorns, He cried out in these words—"He that hath ears to hear let him hear." [2] (2) He cried again in the Temple—"You both know Me and know whence I am." [3] (3) He cried—"If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink." [4] (4) He cried with a loud

[1] St. Matt. iii. 3.
[2] St. Luke viii. 9.
[3] St. John vii. 28.
[4] St. John vii. 37.

voice—"Lazarus come forth."[5] (5) He cried, saying—"He who despises Me and receives not My words, the word which I have spoken will judge him in the last day."[6] (6) On the Cross He cried with a loud voice—"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"[7] (7) Crying with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," He gave up the ghost.[8] Consider this; not without cause did Christ the Lord cry out in pronouncing these words; and from each one of them gather some spiritual fruit for your edification.

3. Consider the different ways by which He cries in the desert. He calls not only by voice, but by example, and especially by the sprinkling of His most precious Blood, "speaking better than did that of Abel."[9] Return Him thanks for these cries, whereby He calls you back to the path to Heaven, and examine how you hearken to Him crying out to you.

4. Consider why the world is called a desert, wherein Christ cries out. Having reflected on the nature of a desert and applied it to the world, and then, on the other hand, reflecting on the Religious state, return thanks to God for calling you to it, and strive to live as becomes a flower in the garden of God, sown or planted by His hand.

[5] St. John xi. 43. [6] St. John xii. 48.
[7] St. Matt. xxvii. 46. [8] St. Luke xxiii. 46.
[9] Heb. xii. 21.

MONDAY.

The Messiah is a Vine.

1. Consider the Messiah as a true Vine in Himself. As the vine has no exterior beauty to please the eye, but is more shaggy and rough in proportion to its age and fruitfulness, so the exterior life of Christ our Lord was without beauty, unacceptable in the eyes of the world—nay, rather hateful to it. Therefore He calls Himself "a worm and no man; the reproach of men and the outcast of the people."[10] Compare your life, your pleasures, your deceptions, your desire of pleasing men, with His life; and having mourned over your sensuality and pride, conform yourself to the stern simplicity of the life of Christ.

2. Consider Christ as a Vine, in our regard. For as the vine imparts to its branches the vital sap that produces the cluster of grapes, so Christ communicates to His members the gifts of grace. Praise the goodness of Christ; return thanks; examine with tender affection the ways whereby He bestows these gifts, and weep that you have profited so little by them in so many years.

3. Consider why you experience so small an influx of spiritual gifts; making as you do but little, if any, progress in the spiritual life. Having recognized the reasons, strive to remove them.

4. Consider the grave punishments with which this Vine threatens the evil branches—"Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He will take away," and, on the contrary, "Every one that

[10] Psalm xxi. 7.

beareth fruit He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit."[11] Reflect upon your own actions, see what kind of branch you are, and strive hard to bring forth fruit, considering how useful, how necessary, how joyful, how honourable it is to bring forth rich fruit.

TUESDAY.

The Messiah is the Eternal Wisdom.

1. Consider that the coming Messiah, as to His nature before He appeared in the flesh, was the Eternal Wisdom of God, Who knew all things, not only past, present, and future, but all that can be, could have been, and may be, as distinctly and as perfectly as though it were only one thing He knew, and that clearly, distinctly, and intimately, nothing being hidden, nothing being obscure. The objects of knowledge of this Divine Wisdom are all those who from eternity have been predestined to heavenly glory, fixed firmly and immovably in His divine memory, which St. Thomas calls the *book of life*.[12] Here, with a most humble and reverent affection, place yourself before this Divine Wisdom, as one poor, infirm, and wounded! ardently praying Him that He would will you also to be inscribed in this heavenly book of the Elect; and as, according to the Angelic Doctor,[13] predestination is helped by prayer, beg it often and ardently, now and in future. Cooperate by good works, that you may ever live as one of the Elect.

[11] St. John xv. 2. [12] 1a, q. 24. [13] Q. 21.

2. Consider that in the knowledge of this Divine Wisdom are all your sins, past, present, and future; of which as they are so vile in themselves, so unworthy of the sight of that pure Wisdom, strive that in you He may either see as few as possible (wherefore fly from them diligently), or at least that He may see them destroyed; on which account mourn for your sins, give yourself up wholly to good works, desiring to suffer for your sins, enduring your sufferings with an even mind, and habitually performing difficult and penitential works for the love of God. See if you do this, and how; and since this concerns yourself, seek your salvation with as much diligence as you now employ in the pursuit of your studies, or any other matters wherein the praise of men is to be gained.

3. Consider in what way this Divine Wisdom knows men; some with benevolence and consolation, others with hatred and detestation; some more, some less, according to the diversity of their merits and demerits. Consider how He knows and beholds you. Strive that He may look at you benignantly; and seek what is needful to this end.

4. Consider that this Wisdom of God is not only speculative, but practical, and both knows and furnishes the practical means whereby His elect may obtain their salvation. See whether you receive those things with which He supplies you through the Holy Scriptures, through your Superiors, through spiritual books, through good companions, through the interior guidance of your conscience; and lest you should wander from the right path, hasten to correct what is amiss.

WEDNESDAY.

The Messiah is Adonai, or Lord.

1. Consider the very noble origin of the Messiah the Lord, Who has not been made Lord by any other, as the Kings of the earth, among whose ancestors may be numbered, at least in Paradise, both husbandmen and gardeners; but of His own nature possesses innate and supreme dominion, which is essential to Him, and is endowed with all good and all power. Rejoice that you are to serve so great a Lord. As therefore those courtiers who have a good, liberal, and powerful lord, dwell willingly in his courts, so do you rejoice that you are in the courts of this Lord, and take heed that you be not expelled. See whether you commit or are about to do anything which might separate you from the grace of so great a Lord.

2. Consider the liberality of this Lord Who supplies you with all things both within and without, Who even made you and gave for your use all creatures, so that in serving Him you may gain as many rewards as you will. Admire His goodness, return thanks, strive eagerly to obtain such great rewards, use all means thereto, perform supernatural works, and bear many evils patiently.

3. Consider the ease with which you may acquire great favour with God; for not by heroic works alone, not even by difficult works, is the grace of this Lord obtained, as is the case in serving earthly Kings, but by most light and easy works, by one pious sigh of a just man, by one most brief act

of reverence, of love, or any other virtue. If earthly courtiers knew for certain that by such acts they could rise in the favour of their Princes, oh, how frequently, how fervently would they perform them. You who seek the favour of a Heavenly Lord, so much greater and more efficacious than earthly favour, why are you so slothful in the performance of good works? Blush, and amend.

4. Consider to what end this Lord requires your obedience. He seeks not His own advantage as earthly Princes do, but your good in this life and in the next; and He makes so great account of your gain, that He seems to look upon it as His own, in order more effectually to excite you to the pursuit of your own good. Why, therefore, do you not seek your own good, eagerly, assiduously, ardently, especially when He offers you every necessary exterior and interior help? Consider your own interests.

THURSDAY.

The Messiah is the Root of Jesse.

1. Consider that the Messiah, born of the family of David, was by reason of His Divinity the Root from whence sprang David himself, as well as the whole human race, on whom the Messiah bestowed the beginning and growth of life before His appearance in the flesh. Hence, not Jesse alone, but all the just, are as trees proceeding from the Root of the Messiah. Admire the condescension of this Messiah, Who disdains not to be the Root which produces you; supplying you with life and leaves

and fruit. Return Him thanks, and pray Him never to allow you to be broken or cut off from Him.

2. Consider the sweetness wherewith this Root communicates the vital sap to the grafts and branches proceeding from Him. This He does gradually and imperceptibly so that no one is aware of it; He does it without coercion, for He forces not our freewill; He offers His grace to the unwilling and the unworthy; but He waits for our consent, that hence we may obtain merit although truly unworthy. Return thanks to this holy Root for so much condescension; blame yourself for your obstinacy in checking the influx of His grace; beg Him to conquer your hardness, and see that you cooperate with Him.

3. Consider the abundance of life-giving sap which this Root possesses; it is truly inexhaustible. From hence the thousands of Saints who are in Heaven have drawn all good gifts. "Of His fulness," says St. John,[14] "we have all received." And yet this Root is full of the good things which He imparts; He loses nothing. Since, then, it is granted to your free-will, relying upon the grace of God, to draw as much as you will, desire with a holy avidity to draw to yourself as much grace as you can from this Root; excite yourself to this desire by many motives, and offer them to this holy Root.

4. Consider the remote and immediate causes which separate the branches from this Root; so that when separated they die away, and are thrown into the fire. These causes are venial and mortal sins. See whether you fly from them, and with what earnest endeavours, and take heed that you be

[14] St. John i. 16.

not separated from this Root to be cast into eternal fire. Shun even venial sins, which dispose you to mortal, as experience shows and St. Thomas teaches.

FRIDAY.

The Messiah is the Key of David.

1. Consider the Messiah is called the Key of David, because, according to the flesh, He was formed from the blood of the Blessed Virgin, who was of the family of David. Examine why Christ chose the family of David, and consider the virtues wherein David especially shone, and by which he pleased God so much. Excite in yourself a love for these virtues, and hope that in you also the Messiah may be spiritually born, if you become like David. You will learn his heroic virtues from those passages in the Psalms, wherein he sang about himself, especially about his ardent love and reverence for God, and his relish for all things belonging to Him. Also from his behaviour towards his enemies, and again from his zeal in promoting the worship of God in others.

2. Consider the Messiah is called the Key of David, in the second place, because thereby David opened to himself the gate through which he escaped from the power of the devil, into which he had fallen through his sins. Oh, how many times has this Key served you to escape from a similar slavery! Return thanks to this Key, and take heed lest you be again imprisoned, and by a just judgment of God find no more a means of escape.

3. Consider that the Messiah is called the Key of David, because David with this Key opened to himself the treasures of God, and from them drew all those divine gifts, whereby God called him a man "according to His own Heart."[15] Here consider the principal virtues which were in David, whether those mentioned in the first point or others, and especially those which are expressed in these verses—"With my whole heart I have sought after Thee. . . . The law of Thy mouth is good to me, above thousands of gold and silver. . . . Thy law is my meditation. . . . Thy justification I will never forget. . . . Oh, how I have loved Thy law, O Lord! This is my meditation all the day long. . . . I have hated every way of iniquity. . . . I beheld the transgressors and I pined away, because they kept not Thy word."[16] "The man that in private detracted from his neighbour, him did I persecute. . . . With him that had a proud eye, I would not eat. . . . The man that walked in the perfect way, he served me."[17] Ponder these and similar Psalms, reflecting upon your own actions, and kindle within you the desire that through this Key you also may find many good things in the treasures of God.

4. Consider that the Messiah is called the Key of David, because with this Key David opened Heaven, where he now reigns in bliss; for this Key alone opens Heaven to the Elect. Rejoice, therefore, in the advent of this Key of salvation, strive to possess it, and shun those things which cause it to be hidden or lost.

[15] Acts xiii. 22.

[16] Psalm cxviii. [17] Psalm c.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Semper Virgo.

1. Consider the excellence of virginity in both sexes. It makes us like unto the Angels—nay, in a certain degree higher than the Angels. Consider what will be the reward, as well essential as accidental, of virginity in Heaven, from the special benevolence which God manifests to those who embrace it, this virtue being so difficult in a flesh liable to corruption. Kindle within you the love of this virtue, and the desire of angelic purity. Having mourned over all that is contrary to it, resolve to persevere in purity of mind and body.

2. Consider that the Blessed Virgin was not wanting in this excellence, but possessed it in the most perfect degree, before, in, and after childbirth. On the other hand, place yourself before the eyes of this most holy Virgin, so different as you are from her, defiled with so many stains, if not of sin, at least of temptation and of thought. With great shame and confusion of soul, weep over your misfortune, and with an eager mind raise yourself up to the attainment of other virtues, to compensate if you have it not for your deficiency in this virginal excellence, which, even if you possess it, cannot equal the virginity of Mary.

3. Consider by what means and ways, and with what earnestness and care the Blessed Virgin strove to preserve her virginity and purity, and examine whether you, who need so much more care, are as watchful over yourself. Observe, therefore, how far

creature. Hence, as this Orient was engendered by His Father from all eternity by His knowledge, and you also were an object of this knowledge, truly this Word, born from the Eternal Father, was not only the expression of the Eternal Father, but also of His creatures, and therefore of you. If this be obscure to your understanding, praise and extol Him Who bore you in His mind while you did not as yet exist, and pray God not to know you as He knows the wicked, but as He knows those who are dear to Him, with the affection of active benevolence. For this it it necessary that, by His grace, you may obtain all things whereby you may please Him.

2. Consider the Messias in His mortal flesh is justly called the Orient, because from Him perpetually proceeded fresh operations, meriting in the highest degree those good things which He promised to us. Hence He truly said of Himself, "I do always the things which please Him,"[1] namely, God the Father. Here consider, and return thanks to God, Who designed so wonderful a redemption for you. Strive to imitate Him in this, that unceasingly and as much as may be, there may proceed from you meritorious works, whereby grace, and a claim to future glory, may increase in you. See if you do this, and pray God often and earnestly for help.

3. Consider that the Messiah immortal in the flesh is the Orient, because from Heaven "He enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world,"[2] producing in him more and more light if He meet with no opposition, in the same manner that the rising sun produces more and more light

[1] St. John viii. 29. [2] St: John i. 9.

till it reaches the meridian. Examine how you receive these divine lights whereby He recalls you from your imperfections and calls you to higher and higher perfection, and put away from you all impediments.

4. Consider that the Messiah in Heaven is the Orient of the Blessed, whom He refreshes with His presence, as the sun refreshes the earth with its light, for that heavenly city "hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it," for the "Lamb is the lamp thereof."[3] If the light of this sun is so delightful, what will be the sight of that Orient in Heaven? Desire it ardently, and strive to be worthy of it.

MONDAY.

The Messiah is King of the Gentiles.

1. Consider that the Messiah, although King of the Jews, may with far greater reason be called King of the Gentiles, because, abandoning the ungrateful Jewish Synagogue, He called the Gentiles into His Church. Thank Him heartily that you are a member of the Gentile Church, but tremble lest you also be abandoned by Him. For if He forsook that Synagogue, so richly endowed with His benefits, by reason of its ingratitude, take heed that He desert you not for the same cause; and as hardly any one becomes suddenly so wicked as to deserve the withdrawal of His efficacious grace, see that you arrive not, little by little, at a state that will render you unworthy of the grace of salvation in the Gentile Church.

[3] Apoc. xxii. 23.

2. Consider how the Messiah acquired His kingdom over the Gentiles in no other way than by the shedding of His Blood. If He shall lay down His life for sin," says Isaias, "He shall see a long lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in his hand."[4] Why, therefore, do you fly from the slightest suffering? Why do you seek your own pleasure in everything? Remember this, that "through many tribulations we must enter the Kingdom of God."[5]

3. Consider the manner wherein the Messiah reigned, not after the fashion of other Kings, but in poverty, in discomfort, without retinue, without pomp, without attendants, without worldly assistance, in one word, in the extreme of poverty. Thus He governed His Kingdom, that you may learn earnestly to cultivate and to show forth by your works these two virtues. See how you practise them, and strive to avoid the sins that are opposed to them.

4. Consider how you serve and obey this King of the Gentiles, in those things which are either commanded or forbidden by Him: first, in Holy Scripture; secondly, in the writings of the Saints; thirdly, through your Superiors; fourthly, by interior inspirations; and having bewailed your numberless defects, especially those which you have fallen into with full deliberation of thought, strive for the future to obey and serve Him faithfully.

[4] Isaias liii. 10. [5] Acts. xvi. 21.

TUESDAY.

The Messiah is Emmanuel, God with us.

1. Consider the first manner in which the Messiah is with us, namely, by reason of the intimate presence, which He has as God through His immensity, being more intimately present to all His creatures than any thing else can be to another. Hence reflect how pure you should be in all your interior and exterior actions, lest you offend the ever present eyes of your Lord. Examine, therefore, how you behave; and accustom yourself to do all things as holily as though you could perceive the presence of God with your bodily eyes.

2. Consider the second manner wherein the Messiah is with us, namely, by reason of our humanity personally united to Him. Recognize your dignity on account of the affinity of human nature with the King of Heaven and earth; see whether your less holy life does not in a certain degree bring shame to so perfect and excellent a kinsman, and, if such be the case, correct what is amiss as soon as possible.

3. Consider the third manner wherein the Messiah is with us, namely, by the sacramental union under the species of bread and wine, always ready and at hand for our refreshment in the most Holy Eucharist. Acknowledge the greatness of this benefit, return thanks, see what profit you have made and should make from so great a good, and be grateful for it.

4. Consider the fourth manner wherein the Messiah is with us, namely, by the presence of His

supernatural image, that is, by justifying grace inherent in the soul. See whether there be signs of this in you, examine whether you have any obstacles thereto, that you may remove them, and endeavour always to increase in His grace, and thus to ascend to the highest degree of glory, in the closer resemblance to the Messiah, for His greater honour, for the greater confusion and grief of the devil His enemy, and for the more abundant splendour and efficacy of the merits of Christ.

WEDNESDAY.

The Messiah is the Gift of God.

1. Consider that the Messiah is called the gift of God, because He is the most perfect of all gifts; never did God bestow on His creatures any gift to equal Him. Return Him thanks for such boundless liberality, and learn how you ought to give to God that which is most perfect; and, as he who gives quickly gives twice, defer not your offering.

2. Consider that the Messiah is called the gift of God, because God gives Him to us out of His pure grace; to us, who by no means deserve Him—nay, rather, who deserve the greatest punishments. Admire this generosity of God, return thanks, and learn to worship and love God for His own sake, without regard to His gifts, and to do good to your neighbour, regardless of his merits or demerits.

3. Consider that the Messiah is called the gift of God, because He is an irrevocable gift; for the hypostatic union is indissoluble, nor is that Divine

Person to Whom our human nature is united prevented by our sins from giving to all sufficient means of salvation. Learn hence not to take away from God that which you have once given to Him, and examine whether you have done so.

4. Consider that the Messiah is called the gift of God, because He is the fountain of all the gifts of God, distributing them to men freely. Rejoice, therefore, that you have One so near at hand Who can endow you so richly. Draw near to this inexhaustible fountain, that you may be enriched with as many and as great gifts as possible, and examine why you are so poor, having so efficacious a fountain of all riches present and intimately united to you.

THURSDAY.

The Messiah is the Prince of Peace.

1. Consider that the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace, because He is the author of peace between men and God by the Sacrament of Penance, which He instituted for the reconciliation of men with their offended God, and for the taking away of sin, which destroys that peace. Consider the greatness of this benefit. How often has the Prince of Peace showed Himself to you in this Sacrament in a spirit of peace, reconciling you to Himself with paternal affection? Think what you owe to this Author of peace for so much goodness, and strive to repay Him.

2. Consider that the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace, because He pourtrayed the beauty of peace in the perfect meekness of His peaceful life.

"Not breaking the bruised reed," as says the Prophet, "nor quenching the smoking flax." "Not crying out in the streets."[6] "Having no reproofs in His mouth."[7] "Delivering Himself to him that judged Him unjustly."[8] Compare the bitterness of your actions, the sharpness of your answers, and the impetuosity of your irritable mind, exhibited often on the slightest occasions, with this Model of peace, and, having deplored your impatience, strive to conform yourself to Christ.

3. Consider that the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace, because He will have the lovers of peace to be familiar with Him as with their Prince; because He takes His delight with such, and admits such to His friendship and intimacy. Hence it happens that when the mind is disturbed, our intercourse with God cannot prosper. Wherefore, if you have at heart this sweet converse with God, cultivate peace with all men.

4. Consider that the Messiah is called the Prince of Peace because, as a Prince in his palace, He dwells in that heart wherein He finds the reason united to God, and the body subject to the rule of reason. Consider whether your reason and your body are thus ordered, and aim at their perfect peace, that you may be an agreeable dwelling for this Prince of Peace.

[6] Isaias xlii. 2, 3; St. Matt. xii. 9. [7] Psalm xxxvii. 15. [8] 1 St. Peter ii. 23.

FRIDAY.

The Messiah is Admirable.

1. Consider that the Messiah is admirable on account of His eternal generation, by which He received from His Eternal Father His Divinity, which is one with the essence of the Father, and which, nevertheless, is in a most perfect manner identified with His own Person, truly distinct from the Person of the Father. Because in this life you cannot comprehend the mystery, believe, admire, return thanks that you know it by faith, and strive in a manner to imitate Him, so that, although you are different from Him, you may, nevertheless, be one with Him by the agreement of your will with His will, and by the resemblance of your life to His life. See whether you are aiming at this, and obtain it with His help.

2. Consider that the Messiah is admirable on account of the union of the nature of man with His Divine Person; and although this is one with His Divine Nature in itself, yet the union of His Human Nature is not said to be a union with the Divine Essence, as common to the three Divine Persons, but a union with the Person only of the Word as distinct from the other two Divine Persons. This also being above your comprehension, admire, believe, return thanks, both for the benefit of this hypostatic union, and for the knowledge of this mystery, and strive to imitate the Messiah in this, that since He is one and the same Person, both God and Man, you may be like Him as man, not

as God, by afflicting your body and your senses with various sufferings, and your soul with sorrow for the love of Him.

3. Consider that the Messiah is admirable in His Temporal Birth, being born in our flesh without detriment to the virginity of Mary. Believe this, adore this admirable Son, and strive in this to imitate Him, that your Mother the Church, the Order which brings you forth for Christ, and forms and builds you up in the spiritual life, may suffer no reproach through your evil ways at home or abroad. Look well to this, and strive to resemble your Messiah as far as possible.

4. Consider that the Messiah is admirable in all His works, by the eminent perfection of each one of them. Adore so perfect a Being; see how far you can become like Him; pray Him to make you like Him, and on your part cooperate with Him.

SATURDAY

On the Blessed Virgin—Felix Cœli Porta.

1. Consider the reasons for which the possession of the Kingdom of Heaven after death is more to be desired and sought after than anything in this life. See whether you seek the Kingdom of Heaven more than the things of earth, and according to the disposition which you find in yourself, either return thanks, or make an act of sorrow, with a firm purpose of amendment.

2. Consider the various difficulties and obstacles in the way of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven, whether from the temptations of the devil, or from

the rebellion of the flesh, or from the impediment of bad habits, bad example, bad advice, or from your inborn tepidity, or from any other causes; and hence learn how greatly to be esteemed are all those aids whereby these obstacles are removed.

3. Consider that one of the most eminent helps towards obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven is the power of the Blessed Virgin, by reason of which she is most justly called by the Church the Gate of Heaven, a name most suitable, both because of the Son Whom she bore, and Who is our Saviour and the Way to Heaven, and also because of the many aids which she supplies to her clients. Hence you must strive to render her favourable to you, and cause her to take you to the bosom of her mercy.

4. Consider to whom this Gate of Heaven lies open; for it is not open to all, even as God offers not to all a final entrance into Heaven. Wherefore, examine your conscience seriously, whether there be not in it something which may prevent your entrance into Heaven, or, at least, render it doubtful; and if you find anything, try speedily to remove it by a good confession and amendment of life, and implore the help of the Blessed Virgin, that the Gate of Heaven may always be open and easy of access to you.

CHRISTMAS EVE.

The Messiah is our Saviour.

1. Consider the great source of joy announced to St. Joseph by the Angel in the Nativity of Christ. "Thou shalt call," said He, "His Name Jesus, for

He shall save His people from their sins."[1] Wherefore, as you are a sinner, and one seeking salvation, rejoice that a Saviour is offered to you, and consider in what way you may procure from Him Who was born for you, deliverance from your sins, not for one day or one year alone, but for your whole life; and hold fast to this way.

2. Consider that God would not have this Saviour given to us without the burden of a grave suspicion resting on His most innocent Mother when St. Joseph knew that she was with child. Admire the judgments of God, Who leads the good by this road to salvation, and permits them sometimes to suffer things which stain their good name and honour. Since you are not better than the Blessed Virgin, why do you shrink from evil judgments of you? Why for the preservation of your small fame do you offend God? Or is the good opinion of God not preferable to that of men? Consider these things, and kindle within your heart a desire and love of your own abjection, and never attempt to free yourself unless questioned by your Superior.

3. Consider the uprightness of St. Joseph, who, being a just man, would not destroy the fame of his spouse, when he knew her to be with child. Learn hence to be careful of the good name of others, even in things that are most grave and certain. Learn hence, how often things appear to us wrong in others when they are not really wrong, when they are even very good, when they are perhaps the source of much that is good, as was this conception of the Virgin that was branded with suspicion.

[1] St. Matt. i. 21.

Examine your actions in this respect, and purpose amendment if you see that it be needful.

4. Consider the advice of the Angel to St. Joseph, given in his sleep, "Joseph son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."[2] Here consider the love of God, Who defends the innocence of the Virgin. Return thanks to God, the defender of the innocence of your Lady and Mother, and to the Angel, His minister in this great cause, and pray ardently, that through the power of the Holy Spirit your Saviour may be born in you, to save you from your sins, and now and until death to defend you from them, and to fill you with every good gift.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

1. Consider the outward appearance of those who stood round the newly-born Christ; consider the interior affections of their souls, both towards God the Father, Who had bestowed so great a benefit on the human race, and towards the tender Infant, born for our sake. Kindle in yourself the like affections towards God the Father and the new-born Child.

2. Listen to the words of the Mother of God, of St. Joseph, and in place of the words of Christ, listen to His infantine cries, and consider in them the holy affections which filled His blessed Soul. Consider the triple affection He entertained, namely, towards the Divine Persons, towards His Mother

[2] St. Matt. i. 20.

and towards St. Joseph, and lastly towards the human race, for whose salvation He had come into the world; and gather from each some spiritual fruit.

3. Consider the Birth of Christ; what a great work of divine love on the part of God; what a marvellous work as regards His Virgin Mother; how wonderful and how salutary with regard to this world and all its miseries. From all these reflections, draw something beneficial to thy soul.

4. Consider the end of Christ's Nativity, which the Apostle expressed in the Epistle, read in the first Mass of the day, in these words—"For the grace of God our Saviour hath appeared to all men, instructing us, that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, justly, and godly in the world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."[3] Meditate upon this according to the second method of prayer; draw from thence examples for spending your life with great holiness, proportioned to the greatness of this benefit, and to the efficacy of the marvellous aids which God has given to us all.

FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN.

1. Consider the great praise bestowed upon St. Stephen by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, wherein he is called, "Full of faith, full of grace and fortitude, and of the Holy Ghost."[4] See how great is the praise, see how far you are from deserving it, consider by what means you may acquire a similar plenitude of grace, and put your hand to the work.

[3] Titus ii. 11-13. [4] Acts viii. 6, 8.

2. Consider the envy and evil mind of the Jews towards him when they accused him of blasphemy against Moses and against God. Consider in this point the happiness of St. Stephen, to whom God would not refuse this mark of the Elect, the malignant tongues of the enemy, steeped in falsehood. Congratulate St. Stephen, return him thanks for bearing all this with a joyful mind; and excite yourself to the desire and love of persecutions inflicted by malicious lips. Scorn your own pride and impatience, if you find such in yourself.

3. Consider the consolation, which ought to render sweet to us every pain suffered in this life for God's sake; which consolation St. Stephen visibly received, when in the midst of his persecutors, beholding the glory of God and of Jesus Christ, he said—"Behold I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God,"[5] being animated by that joy which is given to all who are unjustly afflicted—the glory of God and the help of Christ. Consider, therefore, how great is this good, be inflamed with an ardent desire and love of the Cross, and resolve never to fly from it.

4. Consider the patience of St. Stephen, who, being assailed by the false accusations of his enemies, shamefully cast out of the synagogue, and condemned to be stoned to death, yet never ceased from loving them sincerely; but prayed for them, crying with a loud voice, and with great affection, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge."[6] Compare with this your impatience, ill-will, and rancour towards those by whom you are even justly afflicted, and learn to imitate St. Stephen.

[5] Acts vii. 55. [6] Acts vii. 59.

FEAST OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

1. Consider the first happiness of St. John, that he was admitted by Christ, with Peter and James, to His most secret revelations, on the mountain of Transfiguration, in the Garden, and at other times. This was doubtless not permitted by Christ our Lord without a reason, but for his greater merit; for whenever there is greater merit, it deserves from Christ so much the greater love. Here consider in what manner even you may draw down upon yourself the kindness of Jesus Christ, and experience His liberality in the bestowal of His more special gifts, and strive after this with all your strength.

2. Consider the second favour of Christ towards St. John, who at the Supper "leaned on Jesus' bosom,"[7] and think within yourself, what would you not do or suffer for Christ, if He were now really and truly to appear to you, and draw you to His bosom! What would you not promise Him! Oh, how sweet would appear to you all those things which you suffer unjustly! And yet it is a greater benefit to feed upon Jesus in the Holy Eucharist than to lean upon His bosom. How is it, therefore, that you can do and suffer so little for His sake, and that little so coldly and so slothfully? Acknowledge the gifts of God, distinguish the greater from the less, and purpose amendment.

3. Consider the third happiness of St. John, who, inspired by the Holy Spirit Himself, calls himself the disciple whom Jesus loved.[8] Ponder the excel-

[7] St. John xiii. 23. [8] St. John xxi. 30.

lence of this benefit; so much the more excellent in that God made known the great favour to the disciple Himself. Hence, therefore, inflamed with an ardent desire, beg of Him to love you; He will love you, if you love Him, and you will really love Him, if you show your love by your works. Reflect if, and how, you do this, and strive to acquire what is wanting in you.

4. Consider the principal reason why, as is mentioned by St. Jerome, and by the Church in the Office of St. John, he was so much loved by Christ —because "a special prerogative of chastity had made him worthy of a higher love." Here consider diligently how far the odour of chastity is diffused by your looks, your touch, your reading, your speech, your thoughts, your conversation, your sitting down, your lying down, your gait, your sleep, your dress; and with a detestation of your defects herein, offer to St. John a burning desire of amendment, and pray him that you, too, may be the beloved one of Jesus.

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

1. Consider the humility of Christ, Who, though He might without flight have escaped from the hands of Herod, nevertheless, as though powerless, and weaker than Herod, fled into Egypt. In which flight of Jesus, consider the shame of the flight, and, again, consider the judgment of ignorant men, who, knowing of it, might afterwards display but little faith in Christ and disbelieve His Divinity, for at His entrance into life, not by any miracle, but by

flight, He preserved His life from the persecution of Herod. And all this was for your sake. Compare therewith your pride, ever shrinking from humiliation, and from the unfavourable judgments of men regarding your talents, and see whether you deserve the name of servant of Christ.

2. Consider the order of God's Providence, Who sent not His Angel to Mary, although greater than Joseph, but to Joseph, when He commanded the flight; that He might show forth the order of the Church's hierarchy, wherein He will have even Saints governed sometimes by less perfect men, and through the less, instead of the more worthy, will at times declare His will for the right direction of others. Therefore, with faith in the Divine Providence, obey the commands of your Superiors; thus shall you walk securely, and follow the guidance of God. If such be not your practice, amend.

3. Consider for what reason Christ would have the joy of His Nativity clouded by the sad murder of so many innocents. And draw from this point some fruit for your spiritual benefit.

4. Consider, with respect to the Innocents, why He bestowed on them such a grace, calling them to the Martyr's palm, though ignorant of the grace and though shunning it. Perhaps, among other reasons, it was to preserve them from actual sin, for with such as are free from sin the Lord Jesus is well pleased. Aspire to this cleanness of soul, seek interior and exterior help for obtaining it, and ask those innocent children to be your intercessors.

On the Circumstances of Christ's Nativity.

1. Consider the time of Christ's Birth, for it was the most inconvenient season, the season of winter, which He chose—dreary and bitter from wind, cold, rain, and snow; also it was at night, from similar causes the most unseasonable time. Thus does Jesus love bodily discomfort for your sake. Think over this patient endurance with grateful affection and with compassion; consider your own luxuries and comforts, and resolve to amend.

2. Consider the place which Christ chose for His Birth. Not Jerusalem, which, with its crowds and its renown, He chose at the time of His death for His greater humiliation, but Bethlehem, and even there a poor stable outside the town, and in that stable a mean bed, a hard crib, in an unclean and deserted place exposed to the winds. Compare with all this the comforts of your dwelling—comforts which you seek often with undue eagerness, and acquire, perhaps, not without some offence to God, and yet you profess to imitate Christ. Consider the inconveniences regarding the place of your occupations, which yet oftener you shun; blush, and resolve for the future to do all that is needful to conform yourself to Christ, and to suffer something for Him.

3. Consider the occasion in which the Mother of Christ brought Him forth, namely at the time when, by command of Cæsar Augustus, she had to go with St. Joseph, as a subject of Cæsar, to be enrolled in the register wherein the names of his subjects were inscribed. Thus, while performing acts of obedience, humility, and patience, during the hardships of a

journey, Mary brings forth Jesus. Meditate on these things, and gather spiritual fruit.

4. Consider what earthly consolations were supplied to Christ at His Birth. No solace of friendly visits to our Lady, no delicate clothing for wrapping up the Infant, no assistance of any kind. And then, reflecting on yourself, turn all these thoughts to the amendment of your life.

On the Visit of the Shepherds to Jesus Christ.

1. Consider the reasons why the Birth of Christ was not anounced by the Angel to any other class of men, but only to shepherds, and, having piously thought out these reasons and applied them to yourself, draw thence some spiritual fruit.

2. Consider the words which the Angel, surrounded by a great brightness, spoke to the shepherds —"Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, for this day is born to you a Saviour. And this shall be a sign to you, you shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."[9] Amongst other points consider these two—first, the cause of the joy; second, the meaning of the mystery that, for a sign whereby to discover the new-born Saviour, the only mention was of mean swaddling clothes and a hard manger; and then, reflecting on yourself, strive to draw some profit from each point.

3. Consider the holy affection of the shepherds towards Christ, both in their journey, undertaken without delay and with haste, and again in the presence of the Child; imagine to yourself what

[9] St. Luke ii. 10, seq.

they said to Him and to His Mother, and consider their interior emotions. Then, joining your affections to theirs, piously greet and adore the Child born for you, and beg many things from Him for yourself and for others.

4. Consider the good effect which remained in the souls of the shepherds, who returned after they had seen Christ, "glorifying and praising God."[10] Think what effects the Nativity of Christ ought to excite and indelibly impress in you when you have seen it by faith with your mental vision; beg those good results from the new-born Jesus, and seek with all your strength to acquire and preserve them.

The End of the Old Year and the Commencement of the New One.

1. Imagine yourself kneeling before the Infant Jesus lying in the crib, in presence of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of the Angels who announced His Birth to the shepherds, and of St. Joseph, and call to mind the principal sins which you have, forgetful of the benefits of Christ's Birth, committed in the course of the year. He, as the Apostle says, was born to this end, that "denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly, and justly, and godly."[11] Having recalled your principal sins, weep over them before the Child Jesus, implore pardon for them, and the grace of avoiding them during the ensuing year, and offer the Child Jesus in satisfaction to His Eternal Father.

[10] St. Luke ii. 20. [11] Titus ii. 12.

2. In like manner, as in the presence of Jesus lying in the crib, call to mind the principal blessings whether in common with others or peculiar to yourself, which this year you have received from God, the blessing of prosperity, and more especially the blessing of adversity, if you have borne it patiently. Having considered the greatness, the necessity, and the frequency of these blessings, and your unworthiness of them, return thanks for them to the Child, as for the fruits of His Nativity, beg Him to increase them, and offer the new-born Jesus in thanksgiving to His Eternal Father.

3. Consider if you have made any improvement, and how much, during the past year, which you will know in this manner—(1) if this year you have committed fewer and less grievous sins; (2) if you have done your ordinary duties better than before; (3) if the inordinate motions of your passions have been more rarely felt; (4) if you have borne your trials with less repugnance. And according to what you shall discover in yourself, excite suitable affections towards Christ, and, offering Him to His Father beg for greater progress in the coming year.

4. Offer to the new-born Child, in place of gifts, some resolutions, be they ever so small, yet such as you will fulfil perseveringly. And then resolve to abstain during the whole year from at least one of the principal sins which you have formerly committed. Excite yourself to this by various motives, and beg from Christ, from the Eternal Father, and from the Holy Spirit, the grace of carrying out this good resolution. To obtain it, offer Christ newly born for you, and ask the intercession of the Saints, especially of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph.

CIRCUMCISION OF JESUS CHRIST.

1. Consider the wonderful obedience of Christ, Who submitted His innocent flesh to the law of circumcision, which He was not bound to observe, (1) because He had not original sin, for which it was a remedy; (2) because He was not conceived and born in the ordinary manner; (3) because He was Himself the Lawgiver, Who might exempt Himself from the obligation of this precept; (4) because He was not liable to that carnal concupiscence on account of which God had given that law; (5) because He had come to abolish the Old Law, which required circumcision, and to establish the New Law, whence He might have commenced the abolition of the Old Law by the abolition of this precept. But He preferred to obey, and that with all His sensitiveness to pain and shame, for at that time He possessed the full use of His reason no less than in after years. Admire the obedience of Christ, and see whether there be such in yourself with regard to those things which you are bound to do, and which you are urged in vain to do by prayers, threats, and punishments. Bewail your continual disobedience, and offer to Christ as the first-fruits of His circumcision for your sake, an efficacious desire of obedience for this whole year, remarking particularly your defects in this respect, for obedience is, as it were, the essence of the Religious life.

2. Consider the patience of Christ in enduring this wound in His most holy Body. Look at your sufferings in Religion; you will see how much less

they are than His. Why, then, delicate imitator of Christ, do you shun them, or bear them so unwillingly?

3. Consider the grief of the Blessed Virgin in beholding the circumcision of Christ, from two causes; (1) because she saw Him wounded and sharply lacerated with a knife; (2) because she knew Him to be the fount of sanctity, and yet treated as a sinner. Unite your sorrow to the just sorrow of His most holy Mother. Compassionate Jesus bleeding, thank Him for shedding His Blood so early for your sake, and as a remedy for your sins. Offer this Blood to the Eternal Father for your sins. Adore and piously kiss, and collect in your heart this Divine Blood, as a supremely efficacious remedy against every ill.

4. Consider the humility of Christ in making use of a remedy instituted for original sin, as though He were subject to it. Here detest your pride, who, bad as you are, will be thought good, who cannot bear to be accused or punished, although, through your many sins, committed with impunity, you well deserve those pains which seem to you to be inflicted unjustly. Look at the example of Christ, be ashamed, and amend.

On the Name of Jesus.

1. Consider that the Name of Jesus was given by the Angel at the command of God. Consider hence how great Christ was to be, for all whose names were given or changed by God, became afterwards most perfect, as were Abraham, Sarah, Jacob or

Israel, John the Baptist, and Simon Peter. Consider also the goodness of God, Who is careful even of the names of those He loves tenderly. Seek therefore earnestly the love of God, and expect confidently from Jesus Christ to receive the many graces whereof this Name is a pledge.

2. Consider the signification of this Name Jesus, as explained by the Angel even before His conception. "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus," said the Angel to Mary; "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High."[1] And repeating the same Name to St. Joseph, after the conception of Christ, he said, "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."[2] Meditate on this according to the second method of prayer, with pious affections of joy, hope, thanksgiving for the salvation offered to you, and with petitions for grace.

3. Consider the greatness of this Name, whether because of the superabounding excellence of Christ, or because of the signification of a Name bringing so much good to us, or because of the wonderful effects which the invocation of this Name draws down on our souls and bodies. Hence it is not wonderful that this Name should deserve the worship of which the Apostle speaks, "That in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth."[3] Examine what worship you owe to this Name, see whether you offer it, and with what affection, and supply what is wanting.

4. Consider the affection which the Saints bore to

[1] St. Luke i. 30, 31. [2] St. Matt. i. 21.
[3] Philipp. ii. 10.

the most holy Name of Jesus. St. John mentions it two hundred and twenty-two times, and St. Paul, in his Epistles, two hundred and eighteen times. St. Julianus, wherever he found this Name written, watered it so with his tears, that the letters in the books were effaced, as St. Ephrem, who was an eye-witness, testifies.[4] St. Francis, says St. Bonaventure, when he mentioned the Name of Jesus, or heard it mentioned, was interiorly filled with joy, and it was to him like honey to his taste, and the sound of music to his ears. And St. Bernard said that Name was honey in the mouth and joy in the heart.[5] Likewise the holy Apostles, by invoking this Name, expelled sickness, evil spirits, and temptations. Examine with what affection you make use of this Name, and beg of God, through the holy Name given by Him, that He may ever be Jesus to you.

On the Words of Simeon and Anna the Prophetess regarding Christ.

1. Consider that Jesus, although born for our salvation, was yet, as Simeon prophesied, set for the fall of many[6]—(1) for the fall of the Jews, whom He rejected because of their ingratitude; (2) for the fall of unbelievers who will not acknowledge Him; (3) for the fall of believers who spend their lives in sin. To all of these Jesus Christ brings destruction, through their own fault; because they will not make use of the fountain of salvation. Since, therefore, you are no better than many of them, who believing

[4] Vol. iii., sec. 266. [5] Serm. xv., *On Antic.*
[6] St. Luke ii. 34.

and living well for a time, nevertheless make a bad death, fear, and consider what is to be done or avoided by you, lest you be cut off from the grace of God; for such is the immediate cause of destruction.

2. Consider that Christ is set *for the resurrection of many*[7]—namely, of those who embrace His doctrine and the means of salvation conveyed by it. You will be of this number if you have these things at heart. In this way you may learn if it be so. The means given you for your salvation are—the laws of God, of the Church, and of your Order; the direction of Superiors, the use of the Sacraments, the exercise of virtues, interior inspirations, good examples, the benefits of God, the trials of this life, and, finally, all creatures. If you use these well, that is, in the manner and with the intention required by God and by your Order, hope then Christ is born for your resurrection; if otherwise, fear and look well to yourself, for you are not more secure than the Angels who fell in Heaven.

3. Consider that Christ was, moreover, set for a sword,[8] which was to pierce the soul of the Blessed Virgin; for intense was to be the grief of His Mother at the sight of all His sufferings, labours, persecutions, scourges, and most cruel death. Thus does Christ treat His beloved; such is the mark of those dear to God and predestinated. When, therefore, you shun all adversity, and all things contrary to your own convenience, will, judgment, and honour, you seek not to be in the number of the Elect of God. Think on these things, reproach yourself for your blindness, and amend.

[7] St. Luke ii. 34. [8] St. Luke ii. 35.

4. Consider the words of Anna the Prophetess about Christ, who, departing not from the Temple, and serving night and day by fastings and prayer, "confessed to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all who looked for the redemption of Israel."[9] Meditate, and strive to imitate.

On the End of Christ's Nativity.

1. Consider the first end of the coming of Christ, which the Apostle thus expresses—"Jesus Christ came into this world to save sinners."[10] Christ also says, "I am come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly"[11]—that is, not only that they should be delivered from the death of sin by the infusion of sanctifying grace, which is the life of the soul, and which gives life to the works of men, but also that they may have that grace powerfully increased by good works. Since, therefore, you are a sinner in many ways, rejoice that your Saviour is come; return thanks singly to each of the three Divine Persons for this benefit; return thanks to the holy Angel who announced His coming to Mary and to Joseph, and after His Birth announced Him to the shepherds; return thanks to the most holy Mother who brought Him forth; beg from your new-born Saviour, already bleeding for you, the remission of your sins; and pray Him never to let you fall back into them. And on your part endeavour not to return to them, shun dangerous occasions; mark those that you should most

[9] St. Luke ii. 38. [10] 1 Timothy i. 15.
[11] St. John x. 10.

carefully avoid, and consider how best to provide against them.

2. Consider the second end of the coming of Christ, which St. Augustine declares in these words —"That for our salvation, in speaking and doing, in suffering and enduring, He should be to men below an example how to return (that is, to Heaven), and to the Angels who are above an example how to remain." [12] Examine therefore how, by all that Christ said, did, or endured, you are advancing heavenwards, and correct what should be corrected.

3. Consider the third end of the coming of Christ —namely, that He might show Himself worthy of our love for His own sake, apart from the consideration of a heavenly reward. This, St. Gregory expressed in these words—"Christ appeared in the flesh that He might make us His servants by redemption, and His disciples by the example of His life." [13] See, therefore, how you should live, and what you should avoid, in order that by your words, thoughts, and deeds you may always show yourself Christ's servant by redemption, and a follower of His example.

4. Consider the means by which this end is to be attained, which St. Ambrose expresses—"Christ coming from Heaven to earth, mingled with earthly things that He might make man heavenly." [14] Here consider the properties of those spirits who are in Heaven; how they act towards God, towards each other, towards human beings. Consider the evils from which they are free; and as much as this life will allow, strive to imitate the heavenly life.

[12] *De Cons. Evan.*, l. i., cap. xxxv.
[13] *Past.*, p. i., cap. iii. [14] *Tim.*, i., 1.

THE EVE OF THE EPIPHANY.

1. Consider that God's usual mode of ruling earthly matters is without miracles. He willed that Christ should remain in Egypt as long as Herod lived; when Herod was dead, He commanded Joseph, through the Angel, to go with the Child and His Mother into the land of Israel, giving this reason—"For they are dead that sought the life of the Child."[1] If therefore, not even for Christ's sake would God employs miracles, much less must you expect them; and therefore, in order to escape the snares of your spiritual enemies, and to conquer your vices and temptations, look for no miracles, but apply yourself to the work by flying dangerous occasions, putting aside obstacles, and seeking for ordinary helps. See whether you do this, and in what manner, and amend.

2. Consider how much you ought to shun the occasions of evil, when God would not suffer His Son to remain in Judea, where reigned Archelaus, the son of Herod, the persecutor of Christ, but commanded, through the Angel, that He should "retire into the quarters of Galilee."[2] And yet it was most easy to God the Father, and to Christ remaining in Judea, to avoid the anger of Archelaus, and it was easy for the Blessed Virgin to obtain from God that she and her Son should suffer nothing. How much more, then, should you shun all occasions and perils of spiritual evils, which are more frequent, and more serious, and harder to remove than bodily

[1] St. Matt. ii. 20. [2] St. Matt. ii. 22.

diseases. See what is your conduct, and look well to yourself.

3. Consider the places wherein Christ dwelt when escaping from His persecutors. They were mean places, not celebrated, with high sounding names, as Jerusalem; but He chose Nazareth, of which the people said—"Can anything of good come from Nazareth?"[3] Learn hence, for the sake of thy Lord, not to choose great towns, pulpits full of applause, commodious cells, the higher schools, but rather, by the example of thy King and God, and as far as obedience will permit, choose the worst.

4. Consider the humility of Christ, Who not only chose to dwell in, and to frequent, mean places, but even took His Name from them, for He was called a Nazaræan, and that through a prophecy.[4] Put in the balance with this humility of Christ, your conceit regarding your birth, education, studies, progress, and similar things; and detesting your ambition or pride, learn from the example of Christ that admonition of spiritual men of old—"Love to be unknown, and to be esteemed as nothing."[5]

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

1. Consider how different the judgments of God are from those of men; for He summoned first the poor, and the rude and humble shepherds, and by the most noble of the creatures then in Heaven, by His Angels, to visit the new-born Christ; and lastly, He called the Magi from the East, not by an

[3] St. John i. 46. [4] St. Matt. ii. 23.
[5] *Imitation of Christ*, 1., 2.

Angel, but by a star, adapting Himself to their special occupation, the contemplation of the stars, hereby showing the greater excellence of poverty compared with riches; and that Christ was born to be the Saviour of all, even of the rich and learned of this world, without distinction of persons. Return thanks to the charity of God, calling all to Himself. Return thanks that He has called you to a state wherein, by uniting the poverty and simplicity of the shepherds to secular science, you may resemble the Magi, and participate in the blessings granted to both conditions, and pray that you may never turn aside from your vocation.

2. Consider the eager obedience of the Magi, who immediately undertook a difficult and troublesome journey, for the sole object of adoring a poor Child in a stable; and this with only the guidance of a star, though not without the inspiration of God. Learn hence to obey in things that are of greater moment than the mere worship of Christ in the stable, and more necessary to your salvation and perfection; and expect not an Angel to direct you, but be content with the faintest ray of divine light exciting you to your work. See if it be so with you, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider the fortitude of the Magi in trampling under foot human respect. For although the King was troubled and all Jerusalem with Him,"[6] they did not hesitate to inquire where the new King of the Jews was born, nor to go and see Him, caring nothing what the other ambitious King of the Jews might say or do. Examine how far you overcome human respect in easier matters, wherein

[6] St. Matt. ii. 3.

lies no such peril to life or fame as the Magi incurred; for they neither saw nor heard of Christ dying for them, and you know it with the certainty of faith. Blush, therefore, you who do more for the favour and good opinion of men, than for the favour and esteem of a God slain for you, and strive to amend it.

4. Consider the affection with which the Magi inquired for the new-born Christ, and how they went to visit Him, Whose greatness, and power, and goodness towards the human race, they had not witnessed, as you have. Compare with theirs your own affection towards Christ, Who has died for your sake, Who awaits you in Heaven with a crown of glory, Who has made Himself your food in the Holy Eucharist, and invites you to Himself, and do your utmost to receive Him with the most ardent affection.

SECOND DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider in the new-born Christ the love of the Cross; for He so ordained that the Magi, in seeking Him, came to Jerusalem, where Herod, who sought His life, was then residing. Thus was His persecution to commence, not in an unfrequented town, but in a crowded and important city, and in the palace of Herod. Thus for your sake the Lord Jesus not only did not shun the Cross, but sought for it more and more. You, luxurious follower of Christ, put yourself in the presence of this your King, and examine how eagerly you seek to avoid the Cross, or with what cunning and artifice you

strive to make it as small and as light as possible. Blush, and promise your King a real improvement in this respect, calling to mind the principal occasions when you are accustomed to shun the Cross.

2. Consider the causes why Christ, when He willed to be named and sought for in Jerusalem, chose the title of King of the Jews—"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"[7] and gather some spiritual fruit; striving to love this new but poor King, and exciting yourself to faithful obedience towards Him Who at His Birth and Death would be named King of the Jews.

3. Consider the sincerity of the Magi, who, being men of wisdom and experience, and knowing that an inquiry after the new King could not but give offence in the Court of the King then reigning, yet candidly explained for what reason they had come—"We have come to adore Him."[8] Learn hence, from the heathen, to be sincere in your actions. It is better to suffer something from men, than to be deceitful and insincere in word and deed; for in the end God will reward sincerity, even in this life, and "the sun rises behind the cloud." Examine whether your conduct be sincere with your superiors and equals, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider the cause of the trouble of Herod the King, namely, the inordinate love of himself and of the greatness of his kingdom; for he feared lest the new King should take away his power. And truly it is not so great a wonder that an impious man should be disturbed by this matter, as that a Religious, who had given up worldly pomp and

[7] St. Matt. ii. 2. [8] St. Matt. ii. 2.

chosen the Religious state, that he may spurn the glory of the world, and follow the humility of Christ, should be troubled by the consideration or deprivation of a little fame or profit, far less in value than the royal sceptre of Herod. See if this, perchance, be the case with you, and having bewailed your hypocrisy and pride, seek to follow that which your habit and state of life profess.

THIRD DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider the tronble by which all Jerusalem was disturbed, following the example of Herod; and herein consider three things—(1) the adulation of the people, who, though enduring many evils through Herod, yet strove by flattery to appear disturbed at the announcement of a new King; (2) the union of the whole populous city in persecuting Christ; (3) how pernicious and dangerous is the bad example of one man, leading on others to the same guilt. From all these points, draw some fruit for your spiritual profit.

2. Consider the prudence of Herod, who determining to know with certainty where Christ was born, would learn from none but the Priests, whom he called together for this purpose. He could have found what he wanted in Scripture; he could have inquired from others skilled in the law; but he preferred to consult the Priests. Learn from the example of Herod, to beg for priestly counsel; not to trust your own judgment, especially since such is the will of God, declared to you in Scripture, by the rules of your Order, and by the custom of all the

Saints, and confirmed by happy results. See whether such be your conduct, and correct what is amiss.

3. Consider the simplicity of the primitive Church, and of that immediately following, wherein, although there were many learned men, who well perceived the discrepancy between St. Matthew's account of the answer given by the Priests to the inquiries of Herod respecting the place of Christ's birth,[9] and the words of the Prophet Micheas,[10] nevertheless doubted not the truth of the Evangelist, nor condemned the answer of the Priests as false, but sought to reconcile the two, and succeeded in doing so. Learn from this example, to interpret rightly all the decrees of the Church and of your Order, also of your Superiors, even when, judging according to this world, a different decree might seem advisable; subject your intellect ever to the obedience of Christ, and trust God, Who will not deceive you through His Vicars, even if in their conduct they shall err, but will cause all things to turn out for your good. Such is the teaching of experience, and justly may it be expected from the all-powerful Providence of Divine Wisdom, to Whom, for the love of the same God, thou hast committed thyself.

4. Consider your happiness, from the frequent abiding of Christ within you in the reception of the Blessed Eucharist. If Bethlehem was exalted because He was born therein, how much happier is your soul, which receives Christ so often, not passible, but glorious, not labouring for your salvation, but already possessing the right to save you through His merits, Whose value was made complete by His death on the Cross. Having considered these and

[9] St. Matt. ii. 6. [10] Micheas v. 2.

other points of contrast, see what you should do, who art made worthy to receive so frequently under your roof your Lord, your All in All of Goodness, the Lord Jesus Christ.

FOURTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider the title which the Holy Spirit gave to Christ in appointing the place of His Birth. "Out of thee shall come the Captain that shall rule My people Israel," or as Micheas expresses it, "Who shall be a ruler in Israel." Since, then, Christ is your Captain, your Ruler, your King, behave yourself in His court as becomes a good courtier. In good courtiers imitate these four qualities—(1) great reverence when they stand before the King; (2) greater anxiety for the performance of his commands than for their own comfort; (3) the most faithful execution of orders, even when accompanied with the greatest inconvenience; (4) a life of less ease, and of greater toil than that of their King. See how it is with yourself in regard to all these points.

2. Consider the useless artifice of Herod, who although he learned from the Magi "the time of the star which appeared to them," and sought to know from them where to find Christ, not in truth as he alleged, "that he might come and adore Him," but that he might kill Him, yet failed in his endeavour. Learn hence to shun dissimulation, or insincerity in your actions, for it is evil in itself, nor does it gain the desired success. See if your dealings be artful, and correct what is amiss.

3. Consider the prudence of the Magi, who,

although guided divinely by the rays of the star going before them, would yet be taught by men regarding the place of Christ's Birth; joining human assistance to that of Heaven, as our holy Father St. Ignatius recommends. Draw from this an opportunity of humiliation, for how often do you neglect to seek human aids, when you have not, like the Magi, divine assistance, trusting to your own judgment and exposing yourself to much danger of error in the spiritual life, as well as in other matters. Acknowledge this, and amend.

4. Consider how the assistance of God, granted to the Magi by the reappearance of the guiding star, was continued till they found the place where the Child Jesus was. Contemplate the pious affections which filled the hearts of these good Magi, as they beheld the star going before them, and the manner in which they performed the rest of their journey. Accompany them in spirit with the desire of adoring Jesus, and of bringing back all the good gifts obtained from Him.

FIFTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider the homage paid by the Magi to the Infant Jesus. "Falling down they adored Him." Look at the exterior reverence and posture of the body; contemplate the interior affection of the adoring Magi, and uniting your affection with theirs, adore Christ with them. Examine whether you also worship Him with similar affection, with similar exterior reverence in the Church, in your chamber, and elsewhere; and whether your behaviour in the

presence of His Divine Majesty be like to theirs. Consider the reasons for displaying great reverence in the sight of the Divine Majesty, Who exists everywhere and beholds everything; and correct what you see amiss.

2. Consider the gifts offered by the Magi, not any sort of offering, but abundant gifts, for such is the meaning of the words, "And opening their treasures they offered their gifts." A small offering would not have required the opening of their treasures. Learn hence to be liberal with God, Whom you know better than they knew Him, and remark that he cannot be called liberal who gives only what he owes; but he is liberal who gives beyond what he owes, and with a bountiful hand. See how it is with you, and resolve at least to be towards God such as your duty demands.

3. Consider in particular the nature of the offerings brought to Christ—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Magi were from the East, and they brought those things which abound in the East. So should it be with you; if you offer to God that in which you abound, you will offer much. Now of no gift have you more abundance than of time, for so long as you live you will possess time, even if you desire it not. Offer the whole of it to God, and you will have offered Him an acceptable gift. See, then, you waste it not in idleness, nor in unnecessary and useless actions, to the neglect of those which are both useful and necessary. Consider whether such be the case with you, and think what a blessing it is to have so much time, in each smallest moment of which you may accumulate unceasingly fresh degrees of eternal glory. Oh, that you could understand this. Oh, that

you knew how in this manner to heap up to yourself innumerable treasures of celestial glory. "For he who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly." [11]

4. Consider the mystic signification of these gifts, "In the gold," sings the Church, "is displayed the power of the King, in the frankincense the greatness of the Priesthood, and in the myrrh the burial of the Lord." Serve Christ faithfully as your King, love Him ardently as the Priest offering for thee His Blood upon the Cross, and immolating Himself daily upon the sacred altar, and imitate Him Who drank myrrh and was slain for you, by love of the Cross and a joyful endurance of suffering.

SIXTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider the conditions or properties of gold, applying them mystically to the vow of poverty, wherein having reflected upon your imperfections, if you discover any, bewail them; promise amendment, renew your vow, and offer it again to God.

2. Consider the properties and use of incense, and apply them to the vow of chastity, that you may inflame yourself to greater perfection therein. Deplore your defects, purpose amendment, and renew your vow.

3. Consider the use and effects of bitter myrrh, and apply them to the vow of obedience. Reflect with sorrow upon your imperfections in this respect, detest them, and renew your vow.

4. Consider the reasons for which the oblation of these three vows is more acceptable to Christ than

[11] 2 Cor. ix. 16.

was the offering of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; that you may understand how happy you are in being called to a state so acceptable to Him; that you may excite within you a desire of loving Him yet more, and of observing your vows yet more perfectly.

SEVENTH DAY OF THE OCTAVE.

1. Consider the interior affections of Christ our Lord, and the exterior glance of His eye in receiving the Magi with their adoration and their gifts. Look at Him with all the tenderness of your soul, taste the sweetness of His affection, full of divine love towards the Magi, and excite yourself to honour Him by the oblation of your words and deeds, that you may deserve to be looked at by Him from His heavenly throne, with the same affection wherewith He looked upon the Magi from His swaddling clothes.

2. Consider the joy of the Blessed Virgin in seeing Christ thus honoured by the Magi. Excite within you the same joy, both on account of this homage of adoration, and on account of tbe worship which your Lord receives throughout the whole world, especially from those who are leading perfect lives, and inflame your heart to enter upon a life of holiness, so that you may be a cause of joy to the Blessed Virgin, the holy Angels and blessed spirits; yea, that you may rejoice the Heart of Christ Himself.

3. Consider what St. Joseph thought within himself when he saw Christ thus adored and visited, first by the shepherds and then by the Magi, and

draw some profitable instruction from the contemplation of this most excellent foster-father of Christ.

4. Consider what were the thoughts of the Magi in beholding the undoubted Divine Majesty joined with poverty in that little Body of the Child Jesus, and strive to draw profit from each one of them.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider that the Magi, divinely called to adore Christ, were the first fruits offered to God from among the Gentiles, and the nucleus of the Gentile Christian Church. Consider also the excellence of this Church, whether by reason of its legislator or founder, Christ in the flesh, or by reason of the Sacraments, and of the other abundant means for obtaining eternal life, or again by reason of all the Saints who have flourished therein. Return thanks to God, Who, in the vocation of the Magi, laid in some manner the foundation of His Church, and Who made you a member thereof. Pray Him to give her increase, both among the Faithful and among heretics, and to make you a living and illustrious member of it, to the greater glory of His Name. Consider why this is to be obtained and in what manner, and excite yourself to the pursuit of great perfection.

2. Consider the causes why God gave notice of those things to be done or avoided, not in their waking hours, but in sleep, both to St. Joseph and the Magi, and draw from each some spiritual fruit.

3. Consider the salutary counsel of God to the Magi, that they should not return to Herod, and

how, through them, He has counselled us that we should learn to fly the occasions of those evils which injure the soul, namely, the peril of sin, far worse than that of death or corporal persecution, on account of which the Magi were forbidden to return to Herod. For, although God is able, yet He is not willing to prevent evils into which those throw themselves who love the danger. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and understand what you have to do for the future to avoid the occasions of sin.

4. Consider the caution and obedience of the Magi, who not only did not return to Herod, but even though they might have avoided him in returning the same way, yet for the sake of greater security took a different road. Learn hence to fly not only the immediate but the remote occasions of sin; learn to promote the business of your salvation, not with a little care, but with the very greatest, and in all things to choose the safer side, especially in things relating to conscience. Shun, therefore, all lax opinions; make more account of eternity than of any temporal benefit, wherein lies even the most remote danger to eternal salvation. See if such be your conduct, and correct whatever is amiss.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the humble piety of Christ towards God, when, at the age of twelve years, although He might have worshipped God equally well at home, He went with Joseph and Mary to the Temple of Jerusalem, a journey of some days from His own

abode, to obey the law imposed upon all males, and this without being under the obligation of obedience. Learn hence not to neglect those things which, if not absolutely necessary for salvation or perfection, are nevertheless customary to pious Novices, as well as to others, and having reflected on your own life, correct what is amiss.

2. Consider in what manner Christ performed that journey to the Temple, with what look in His eyes, with what motion of His hands, bending of His limbs, and movement of His feet, whether slowly or rapidly, whether with abundance or scarcity of words, with what tone of voice, what manner of performing the various actions of eating, drinking, and speaking, and strive to profit from all.

3. Consider the devotion of Christ praying in the Temple, His interior affections, His bodily posture, the time He spent in prayer, the part of the Temple wherein He prayed, the custody of His senses, and from all gather fruit for the amendment of your own actions, comparing yours with His.

4. Consider the affection of the Eternal Father, and of the holy Angels, when they beheld Jesus praying. Imagine that you see them. Rejoice and exult that the prayer of Christ was so acceptable, and inflame yourself from this sight to strive for most fervent prayer. So may you be worthy that the Eternal Father with His Saints should contemplate you with joy when you pray, and bestow on you the abundance of His gifts.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the reasons why God, in the Old Law, commanded all males to appear three times in the year in the place appointed for sacrifice, and why He did not oblige females to do the same; and reflecting on our temples and sacrifices, and upon their far higher excellence, excite in yourself a great desire to frequent our churches and sacrifice, to your manifold profit and consolation.

2. Consider the generosity of Mary in the worship of God. Although she was not subject to sin, nay, rather was full of grace, and although she might have worshipped as well at home as in the Temple, yet she preferred for the sake of religion, to go to the Temple, not being compelled thereto by the law of God, which applied only to males. Compare yourself and your necessities with the Blessed Virgin, and strive to profit by her example.

3. Consider the constancy and firmness of Christ in seeking the honour of His Eternal Father, for Whose sake, without regard to His Mother and St. Joseph, who would suffer grief on His account, He remained in the Temple, disputing with the doctors of the law. Learn hence not to study human respect when there is a question of things appertaining to God, and, if necessary, to oppose at least your equals, when God regarded not His holy Mother and St. Joseph. Reflecting then upon your own actions, see how often, through human respect, you have no respect for God or for the things of God. Consider how disgraceful and dangerous is this conduct, and amend.

4. Consider the modesty and humility of Christ, Who sat in the midst of the doctors, as St. Gregory remarks, "not teaching, but questioning, although by the power of His Divinity He might have bestowed the word of learning itself upon His teachers." Learn hence that humility, so familiar to all the servants of God, who, even in things well known to them, recur to the advice of their superiors. Such is the custom of careful and prudent men in matters relating to study, as well as in spiritual and practical matters. Consider the necessity and utility of this practice.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider with what modesty and humility Christ our Lord sat in the Temple in the midst of the doctors, both out of reverence for the place, and of respect for the doctors; also, with what modesty He questioned them, and answered their questions. Seek from this consideration to conform your manners to the model of Christ, putting away from you all defects you see in them.

2. Consider by what food Christ our Lord was sustained for the three days that His parents had left Him. According to St. Bonaventure and others, He begged His bread. Here, with tender affection of soul, look at Jesus going through the streets, asking for bread, and afterwards taking refreshment. Excite yourself to compassion at the sight, likewise to gratitude for so much humiliation and discomfort endured for your sake; again, to the love of poverty

and the desire of temperance, and detest your eagerness for superabundant or choice food.

3. Consider the pious negligence of Mary and Joseph, who departed, leaving Jesus at Jerusalem, believing Him to be among their kinsfolk and acquaintances, for He was not in need of the elders, to whose custody He was intrusted. Learn hence not easily to blame the omissions of others, or to accuse your neighbour of negligence. It happens to the most holy and discerning persons to neglect many things, without fault of theirs. Rather learn to excuse all things, so that, as St. Dorotheus says, you ascribe the cleanliness or uncleanliness of the cells you see, to some good reason. See if such be your conduct, and correct your rash judgments.

4. Consider the mystery hidden in the place where Christ was found. Why was He found nowhere but in the Temple, in the place of prayer, dedicated to God? Might He not just as well have been found in the market-place, in the fields, in an ordinary house? Think on the reasons, and strive to draw profit from them.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the singular prudence and decorum of speech which appeared in the answers of Christ, to the great astonishment of all the doctors who were present. Rejoice at beholding your Lord, even at so tender an age, held in so great an esteem by all, and reflect what a beautiful and honourable thing it is to Religion, when her sons so behave among externs, that by their exemplary actions and words

they inspire admiration and love of virtue in all who behold them. Consider how necessary this is, and whether such be your conduct, and endeavour so to behave.

2. Consider the humility of Mary's words, who, as St. Augustine observes, when mentioning herself and St. Joseph, gives the first place and rank to St. Joseph, and not to herself, although she, and not St. Joseph, was the true parent of Christ—"Behold," says she, "Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."[1] Thus, in the simplest words, and in the manner and order of speaking, does true and deep humility betray itself; thus does it despise nothing, however small, but seeks every occasion of abasement. See whether this be usual with you, and correct what is amiss.

3. Think how great must be the value of the bodily presence of Christ. For although Mary and Joseph had Him present to them by grace, and by reason of His Divinity, yet when He was not bodily present, they sought Him sorrowing. Learn from hence the value of Holy Communion, wherein Christ is corporally present, but in a far more excellent and admirable manner than when visibly He lived in the house of Mary. Why, therefore, do you not seek Him in the Holy Eucharist with that eagerness of which He is worthy? Why, after having received Him, do you weary of your customary colloquy with Him, and rush with undue haste into occupations which distract your mind? Blush, ask pardon, and, for the future, seek Him more ardently, and having found Him, spend more time in conversing with Him.

[1] St. Luke ii. 48.

4. Consider the title given by Mary to St. Joseph —"Behold," says she, "Thy father." Although, truly, not Joseph, but God alone was the Father of Christ. Nor was Jesus angry at this, nor did Mary deserve to be called untruthful. Think over these things, examine the causes, and applying them to practice, learn not to be easily angry with others for not speaking with exactness, and not to treat with contempt or contumely everything which has the appearance of incorrectness. Consider what is your conduct, and accustom yourself to interpret all things favourably.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider, and impress deeply in your heart and on your lips, those words of Christ—"I must be about My Father's business."[2] Which words may rightly be used whenever anything occurs that is likely to withdraw you from some good work in God's service. Whenever you are tempted to transgress any rule, or to commit any offence, then, if not in words, at least in deed, make answer—"I must be about my Father's business." See if such be your conduct, or if you do not rather choose those things to which evil companions by word or example incite you. Be ashamed, ask pardon, and avoid such evil company.

2. Consider how much it concerns you to spend your whole life, in your Father's business, thus to satisfy for your own sins, and for the sins of others, and to please Him, to receive the prize set before

[2] St. Luke ii. 49.

you, to do the will of God, as far as it is known to you, to obtain the end of your vocation, which He requires you to obtain in this manner, and for many other reasons which you yourself may discover. Examine, therefore, every hour of the day, and all your occupations, and consider whether they be such, and done in such manner, that it may truly be said of you, that you are about your Father's business. If it be not so, mourn, weep over your negligence, and amend.

3. Consider the necessity of a special grace of Christ, for want of which Joseph and Mary, as the Evangelist states, did not understand those words of Christ, although so clear—"I must be about My Father's business." For they did not yet understand fully what was that business of the Eternal Father about which He must be occupied. Thus it is not sufficient to hear salutary words and admonitions, if the full grace of Christ be wanting. Thus it is that by the same words one is converted, and another is untouched. Therefore, dispose yourself for the reception of Christ's richest grace, and do what you see necessary to this end.

4. Consider the obedience of Christ, Who, in conformity to the will of His parents, left the Temple, and returned to Nazareth. Think upon this; and consider also, that although infinitely above His Mother and St. Joseph, so that He was in no way bound to obedience, yet not only in dwelling with them, but in all things, was He perfectly "subject unto them."[8] Learn hence how you should obey, and with what exactness. Also, what defects in this matter you have to avoid.

[8] St. Luke ii. 57.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin.—Sumens Illud Ave.

1. Consider in what posture the Archangel Gabriel found the Blessed Virgin, whether lying down, standing, sitting, kneeling, or walking, when he said to her, "Hail Mary, full of grace," &c. Think over your own habits, and gather from this point some hints for your amendment.

2. Consider the interior affections with which the Blessed Virgin heard this reverential salutation, "Hail, full of grace," first of all dwelling upon those which are described in the Gospel, and then upon those which are piously attributed to the most grateful and most holy Virgin. From all of them gather some spiritual fruit, after an inward reflection on yourself.

3. Consider the first words of the Angel, "Hail, full of grace." See from them what fulness of grace was in the Blessed Virgin, and how little there is in you, although you might continually grow in grace, if you would continually spend your time in works that have a supernatural object, with a conscience free from mortal sin. Resolve from henceforth to grow in grace, and seek what is needful for this end.

4. Consider the manner in which St. Gabriel, appearing to her visibly, said the words; that is, with what devotion, with what look, what movement of the lips, what tone of voice, what reverence. Compare all these with your actions and your words.

Strive to make thine angelic, and correct your defects in speaking with your superiors, inferiors, and equals.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider the behaviour of the Mother of Jesus, and of Jesus Himself with His Disciples, at the marriage feast, in speaking, eating, drinking, and reposing. Then, considering yourself and your own actions, strive to gather fruit for your amendment.

2. Consider the end for which Christ our Lord, and His most virtuous Mother, and His modest Disciples, did not disdain to go to the nuptial feast, not seeking worldly mirth, nor delicate food, nor useless conversation, not for the avoiding of work or the love of distraction, but for other most excellent ends concerning the propagation of God's glory. Consider what were these ends and how they sought them there, and applying them to yourself, draw spiritual profit therefrom.

3. Consider the tender solicitude of the Blessed Virgin, who, when the wine failed, said to Jesus, "They have no wine."[1] Rejoice at this tender feeling of charity towards the needy. Return thanks to her, and entertain a great hope that, even if you are silent, your most holy Mother will intercede for you in your necessities, if you are worthy of her clemency. Consider what you have to do to deserve her favour, and strive to accomplish it.

4. Consider the moderation of soul in Jesus Christ, Who, although He could immediately, by a miracle,

[1] St. John ii. 5.

have given wine to the guests, yet waited for awhile. Learn hence to restrain the impetuosity of your will, even in good things, and neither instantly nor hastily to perform those things which have to be done, but rather to choose that time which a just necessity demands. So shall you be master of yourself and of your actions, and shall not obey the impetus of your affections, but shall rule them, and follow rather the guidance of a well-ordered reason. See if such be your conduct, and correct what is amiss.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the answer of Christ to the Blessed Virgin, "Woman what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come."[2] Wherein reflect on these two points: (1) the freedom of Christ from all human respect, when He refused for awhile even to His Mother the thing which she asked; (2) that God does not immediately grant even to the Saints their just petitions. Hence learn to persevere in prayer, even if you be not immediately heard, and never through respect for men in high station, to do anything which is not right or suitable to do. See what is your own conduct, and correct what is amiss.

2. Consider the words of the Blessed Virgin to the servants at the feast, "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."[3] Certain of help, she proposes the means of obtaining what they needed, namely, perfect obedience. Think that these words are said

[2] St. John ii. 4. [3] St. John ii. 5.

to you, and obey them if you would have from God what you require. Wonder not if you fail to obtain much that you have asked for, when you do not listen to Christ. You will perceive your deficiencies by calling to mind His counsels given in the Gospel; therefore strive to do so and to fulfil them.

3. Consider the manner whereby Christ divinely supplied the guests with wine. "Fill," said He, "the waterpots with water, and they filled them up to the brim."[4] Learn hence to obey the commands of God most perfectly, like the waiters at the feast, who filled not the waterpots anyhow, but in the best manner possible, up to the brim; whence it is no wonder that Christ should have rewarded this perfect obedience. Look through your principal daily occupations undertaken for the will of God, and see if they be performed as perfectly as is possible, then reproach yourself for your negligence, and be not astonished if you perceive not in yourself those gifts of God which His perfect servants receive. Resolve to amend.

4. Consider the reasons why Christ performed His first miracle at a marriage, and why He chooses for the subject the marvellous change of water into wine, when rash tongues might have cavilled at Him, as favouring luxury and supplying materials for inebriety.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the first means whereby Christ our Lord takes away the sins of the world, according to

[4] St. John ii. 7.

the title given Him by John the Baptist in these words—"Behold the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the world."[5] He offered many satisfactions through His Body—hunger, thirst, heat, cold, toil, discomfort of many kinds, and lastly, an agonizing death for our sins; accompanied by interior pains and anguish. Think of this terrible means whereby Jesus Christ took away the sins of the world; return ardent thanks for such love. Consider how very much you are bound to satisfy for your sins; see whether you do this, and purpose amendment, at least in bearing those trials which afflict you, and come to you unsought, for your venial sins alone deserve many sufferings.

2. Consider the second means whereby Jesus Christ takes away the sins of the world—namely, by the Sacraments duly received, especially those of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. Dwell upon this thought, considering with a grateful soul the efficacy of these Sacraments for taking away easily and thoroughly all our sins. Thank God for so much goodness. See how much gratitude you display for it, and how much you turn it to account.

3. Consider the third means whereby Jesus Christ takes away the sins of the world—namely, by the supernatural aids of His grace. By illuminating our intellect, and inflaming our will, He turns our hearts from sin and produces in us the various good acts by which our sins are shut out from the soul; as, for instance, when we detest them with all our hearts, when we grieve bitterly for them, when we love God above all things. Reflect that it is in your power to elicit frequently such acts as exclude sin,

[5] St. John i. 29.

because the grace of God is ever present to you. Why then are you so negligent and tepid in this respect, when you are so loaded with daily sins. Examine yourself, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider the fourth means whereby Jesus Christ takes away the sins of the world—namely, by means of men, who through their good example, counsels, reproofs, and penances, help others to shun sin, and save them from perishing in it. Thank God for this most necessary benefit. See how you are employing these means for avoiding sin, and correct what you see amiss in your life.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the humility of Christ, Who came from Nazareth of Galilee to the Jordan, to be baptized by John with that baptism, of which St. Thomas says, "It was a kind of protestation by which men publicly promised to do penance."[6] This penance, Jesus Christ did not and could not need, inasmuch as He was impeccable. Here compare your pride with the humility of Christ; think how often you will not bear to be thought ill of when you deserve it, nor manifest the just signs of penitence. Detest your vanity and amend.

2. Consider for what end Jesus received baptism; in order, as St. Ambrose observes, that by His example He might exhort all to receive that baptism.[7] Hence, learn how agreeable to Christ is the giving of good example; and see whether you have this at heart, not only for the good of others, but for your

[6] iii. 38. [7] *In Luc.*, l. ii., cap. ult.

own profit. Excite yourself to this by several motives, and especially by the example of Christ, Whom you are bound to imitate.

3. Consider the words of John to Christ before baptism—"John stayed Him, saying, I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?"[8] Learn from these words to shun, as far as you are able, high offices, and learn that such disinclination is not contrary to obedience, provided it be joined to a hearty will of performing what is absolutely commanded us. See whether you shun high offices, and love those that are mean. And if you find aught to correct, whether at home or abroad, in your employment or your leisure, or in any other circumstance, strive to amend.

4. Consider the manner wherein Jesus Christ entered the Jordan to be baptized, how He received the water of baptism from St. John, and contemplate Him leaving the water after baptism. Reflect then upon your own actions, and draw profit from His example.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the reasons why Christ said these words to St. John, who dissuaded Him from baptism, "Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." Truly, because profound humility of heart and work, joined to an exemplary life, is the means to obtain all justice, and is in some manner the fulfilment of all justice. Think on the truth of this, and excite yourself with diligence to act accordingly.

[8] St. Matt. iii. 14.

2. Consider the reward of Christ's humility, for when He came out of the water, "He saw the Heavens opened, and the Spirit, as a dove, descending, and remaining on Him."[9] Contemplate this scene as though present, congratulate our Lord on this honour, rejoice tenderly at it, and excite yourself to the earnest endeavour of pleasing God, Who never leaves us without recompense.

3. Consider the reasons why the Holy Spirit, in appearing over Jesus Christ, took the form of a dove, and strive to gather thence some spiritual fruit.

4. Consider the Voice from Heaven over our Lord, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."[10] Oh, what great praise is this. What a great good it is to please God, to be loved by God. Ponder this well, and see by what means you can become beloved of God, and what things they are which please Him, and use every effort to acquire them.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the effects of the Holy Spirit in the Humanity of Christ, after His descent under the form of a dove. "He drove Him," that is, He powerfully impelled Him, "into the desert."[11] And for this end, "to be tempted by the devil."[12] Learn hence that it is not contrary to perfection to suffer temptations which you have not caused by your fault, for they assail even perfect souls, to their great

[9] St. Mark i. 10.
[10] St. Matt. iii. 17.
[11] St. Mark i. 12.
[12] St. Matt. iv. 1.

spiritual profit. Be not impatient therefore under temptation, change no good resolution made before the temptation, and fly not from the trials which may be sent by the Holy Spirit for some good end. See what is your conduct, and prepare your soul for temptation, for arrows that are foreseen wound the least.

2. Consider the perfect humility of Christ in permitting Himself to be tempted by the devil, a greater injury than if some most powerful King, sitting in his council, were to be intruded upon by a vile slave, disturbing him and inciting him to unworthy deeds. Compare with this the trials you endure with such an uneven mind from your fellow-creatures. Correct your impatience by the example of Christ, and learn to be meek.

3. Consider the fast of forty days and nights endured by Jesus Christ for your sake. Return thanks for this benefit, and think how you ought to mortify your body in food and drink, on account of your sins, and of Christ's goodness when He punished His most innocent flesh. See whether you do this, or with how much imperfection, and correct your defects in this particular.

4. Consider what were the actions of Christ in the desert during these forty days, and strive to draw profit therefrom.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Gabrielis Ore.

1. Consider the Hierarchy, from whence St. Gabriel was chosen to be sent on this glorious mission.

Probably, as St. Gregory thinks, he was one of the first order of Angels, that the excellence of the Blessed Virgin might be commended, as well as the importance of our salvation shown forth at its commencement by tbe choice of so high an ambassador from God. Kindle within thee a tender affection towards God, Who has so exalted you that He has sought not only your profit, but even your honour and dignity. Return thanks for such great benefits, and see wherein you may display your gratitude.

2. Consider that this was not the first mission of St. Gabriel. He had been sent long before to teach Daniel hidden mysteries.[13] This would appear to be a lesson from God, that they who once faithfully accomplish what they are commanded to do, are usually selected for matters of higher moment. And although offices of worldly dignity are not to be desired by those who have embraced the humility of the Religious life, yet they may desire the greatness of supernatural gifts and the occasions of pleasing God more and more. Examine with what fidelity and diligence you have fulfilled the commands of God, and you will see whether you deserve to be raised by Him to higher merit.

3. Consider that from the mouth of St. Gabriel, saluting the Blessed Virgin, proceeded only a threefold discourse—(1) that which tended to the honour God; (2) that which was beneficial to man; (3) that which reproved the enemies of God. Examine the matter of your own words, and acknowledging your numerous defects, study to conform your speech to the most holy speech of St. Gabriel.

4. Consider the manner of St. Gabriel's address

[13] Daniel viii., ix.

in saluting the Blessed Virgin, examining these four points, namely, (1) with what voice he spoke, whether deep or low; (2) whether rapidly or slowly; (3) what attitude of the body he had assumed; (4) with what application of mind in the utterance of each word. From all these points draw comparisons with your own speech, and correct what is amiss. Then congratulate St. Gabriel on his message so well delivered, and pray him to obtain for you the rich fruits of so salutary an embassy.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider the three-fold feeling of the leper in approaching Christ. (1) The feeling of humility, on account of his bodily uncleanness; (2) the ardent desire of obtaining health; (3) an earnest petition for obtaining it. You, in like manner, if you will be cleansed from the spiritual leprosy of your sins, even those that are venial, compare together this corporal and spiritual leprosy; cherish those three affections in your heart, and turn yourself to Christ. Why, when you are conscious of so many sins, have you not the same longing for cure as the leper had? Be ashamed, and amend your life.

2. Consider the words of the leper to Christ—"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."[1] Think on those words, and applying them to the Blessed Eucharist, which to-day you are about to receive, and with great affection of soul say the same to our Lord hidden under the sacramental species.

[1] St. Matt. viii. 2.

3. Consider the manner in which Christ healed the leper. "Stretching forth His hand, He touched him, saying, I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed." Return thanks that the leprosy was driven away, and congratulate the leper on his cure. Desire the cure of your spiritual leprosy, and hope for it, you who are so often touched, not only by the hand of Christ, but by His whole Body; yea, who even feed on Him. Examine why it is that, refreshed so many times by this health-giving Body, you are not cured of your infirmities, and strive to remove the obstacles to your health.

4. Consider the words of Christ to the leper—"See thou tell no man; but go show thyself to the Priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Think over the reasons for these three admonitions given by Christ to the leper restored to health, and gather from them some counsels for the amendment of your life.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the condition of the desert wherein Christ, for your sake, retired after His baptism—"He was with beasts."[2] It was not without a mystery that the Holy Spirit willed this circumstance respecting the desert to be written, it was to make every place dear to us which we inhabit for Christ's sake. First of all, contemplate Christ dwelling among the beasts of the woods; then compare with this dwelling, all the most disagreeable places that

[2] St. Mark i. 13.

may fall to your lot in Religion, and learn never to refuse them, or complain of them, for they can never be so mean as the desert with its wild beasts.

2. Consider the discomforts of hunger and thirst which Christ endured for you in the desert. Look at Him with pious affection and commiseration, hungry and thirsty for your sake. Return Him thanks, and compare with His hunger and thirst your excesses and delicacies in food and drink, so repugnant to His example and to the state of poverty which you have embraced. Detest these excesses, and for the love of Christ purpose seriously to amend.

3. Consider the affection of the Eternal Father and the holy Angels towards the Humanity of Christ, afflicted in this manner for our sake in the desert. Contemplate this scene with your mental vision, exciting within yourself a spiritual taste and odour of the mortifications of Christ, and of the affections of the Divine Persons towards Him, thus chastising Himself. Let this spiritual taste arouse in you a great longing to mortify your flesh in many ways for Christ's sake.

4. Consider the liberality of Christ towards you, and the copiousness of your redemption. Although in absolute and simple truth, such maceration of His flesh was not necessary for your redemption, yet He chose it voluntarily. Learn hence, for Christ's sake, to do and suffer things to which you are not obliged. And yet how slothful and unfaithful you are in offering to God even those actions which you are bound to perform. Blush, ask pardon of God, and amend.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the artifice of the devil, who, seeing the hunger of Jesus after His long fast, took occasion to tempt Him to seek for food wherewith to appease His hunger—"If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Thus the devil attacks a man in that wherein He finds him weakest, and urges him on to those things to which he has most propensity. Examine the state of your soul, see wherein you are most weak, to what things you are most inclined, and consider whether you are watchful of yourself, and ever on your guard. Having recognized your danger, provide against it.

2. Consider the answer of Christ to the first temptation—"Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." Hence we learn that they who are devoted to the savour of God's Word—that is, to divine doctrine—are in a certain manner appeased thereby, so that they become less solicitous for the feeding of their body, and less afraid of suffering hunger. See if it be so with you, and by the example of those whom you have read or heard of as having attained to this perfection, accustom yourself seriously to spiritual studies, and to the contempt of all cravings of the palate.

3. Consider the second temptation of the devil, when he placed Jesus on a pinnacle of the Temple —"If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down; for it is written, that He hath given His Angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they

bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone." To whom Christ answered—"Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Learn from this to proceed with fear in the service of God, and not vainly to look for help without using the means given to you. Examine your conduct, see how you avoid all occasions of succumbing to temptation, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider the third temptation of the devil, when he offered Christ all the kingdoms of the world, if, falling down, He would adore him. Had Jesus done this, He would not have received these kingdoms. Thus does the devil deceive many. He promises much, and gives little or nothing. Yet he gains over many, for he persuades them to accept his evil suggestions more frequently than divine inspirations, and to seek earthly goods more eagerly than heavenly rewards. Is it so with you? Then weep for it, be ashamed, ask pardon, and amend your life.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the mystery concealed under the departure of Satan from Christ, which did not happen till he heard these words—"The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." From this we may learn that the devil flies vanquished from all those who show by their deeds that they are serving God alone; not offering half their service to the world and human respect, and half to Christ. Consider that such half service is disgraceful; see how it is with you, and amend.

2. Consider that the devil did not depart altogether from Christ, but only, as St. Luke says, "for a time."[3] If, therefore, Jesus was not free from the repeated attacks of the devil, tremble for yourself. In the time of peace, arm yourself and prepare, that the tempter, finding you prepared, may do you no harm. Examine yourself in those things wherein the devil is accustomed to tempt you, see how you provide against his attacks, whether it be with such care as soldiers display when expecting an enemy, and blush to think that you prepare with less diligence than they, against an enemy far stronger and more cunning than any earthly foe. Make good resolutions for the future.

3. Consider the result of the Lord's temptation, in the ministry of the Angels—"Behold, Angels came and ministered to Him."[4] If this could happen now, how happy would you think yourself! Yet God offers you more than this after victory over temptation. He prepares for you the vision of Himself, He offers Himself as the prize. Why do you fly from the trials whereby He tests you, whether they come from your fellow-creatures, or from any other source? Why do you grow weary? "Expect the Lord, do manfully,"[5] He will be "thy reward, exceeding great."[6]

4. Consider the manner in which the holy Angels ministered to our Lord: with what interior affection, with what exterior devotion and diligence. Congratulate your Lord on this good service, congratulate the holy Angels that they were made worthy to serve Christ. By their example, reprove your own negligent

[3] St. Luke iv. 13. [4] St. Matt. iv. 11.
[5] Psalm xxvi. 14. [6] Gen. xvi.

service, your indevotion, external irreverence, internal tepidity, especially at the Holy Sacrifice, in spiritual reading, in prayer, in examen of conscience. Strive hard to correct all your defects.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider Christ as an inexhaustible source of all good. St. John says—"Of His fulness we have all received, and grace for grace,"[7] that is either accumulated grace, or one one grace, another another, "according to the measure of the giving of Christ."[8] Meditate on the depth of this fountain, from whence, though at the same moment, countless thousands of men should draw in as copious abundance as the Blessed Virgin herself, yet worlds upon worlds of the greatest Saints would always find an infinite supply. Look with amazement upon the excellence of Christ, and rejoice that you serve so rich a Lord. Why then have you hitherto drawn so little, when the fountain is open, and pouring itself into you by so many channels? Examine the reasons; blush; bewail your negligence, and strive to amend.

2. Consider the means used by the great servants of God, especially those of your Order, to draw an abundance of gifts from this divine fountain, which you may learn by calling to memory their lives, particularly their victories over self, and their generosity towards God in doing and suffering. Then, reflecting on your life, see what you have to do in order to be speedily and abundantly enriched by Christ.

[7] St. John i. 16. [8] Ephes. iv. 7.

3. Consider the difference between the Old and New Law, shadowed forth in the words—"For the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."[9] For Christ has left in His Church most efficacious fountains of grace, namely, the Sacraments, and many Priests in all parts of the world, as dispensers of this grace. Truth came by Him, through the manifestation of those truths which have been foreshadowed by the Old Law, and by His own example, showing what was true and good, and what only fictitious good. Examine how you seek those good gifts, and how you follow after the truths taught by Him, truths which are so contrary to the laws of this world, and study to correct your actions.

4. Consider the special graces and truths common to the Religious state, and those in particular given by Christ to your Order, wherein Religious differ from seculars, and we from other Religious. Return thanks to God for them, examine what use you make of them, grieve over your negligence, and for the future amend your life.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the first degree of humility in St. John, who, when messengers were sent by the Jewish Synagogue to ask if he were the Christ, answered, "I am not."[10] This is the first essential in humility —not to attribute to ourselves that which we have not. Think how often you have claimed natural and supernatural qualities for yourself, in word, or

[9] St. John i. 17. [10] St. John. i. 21.

desire, or deed, striving by dissimulation to appear that which you are not. Blush; ask pardon of Christ, the Master of humility: and amend.

2. Consider the second degree of humility in St. John, who when they asked, "Art thou the Prophet?" answered "No!" although Christ had said he was "more than a Prophet." [11] Thus humility shuts the eyes, that we may not see much that we really possess. See how it is with you in this respect, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider the third degree of humility in St. John, who, not content to refrain from any claim to undeserved honour, or to avoid the display of that which he really had, would also absolutely assume a most humble title; "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness." See whether you positively humble yourself, ascribing to yourself by words or deeds such things as may really humble you, and strive to amend what is amiss.

4. Consider the greatness, the manifold greatness of St. John, inflicting on himself a three-fold humiliation. For he was praised by Christ beyond all, and extolled for his admirable state of life, yet he thus humbled himself. Compare yourself with St. John. Oh, how different are you from him! Why are you proud? Why do you not humble yourself? Why do you not trample self-esteem under foot for Christ's sake? Blush; weep; observe the workings of your pride, and cut them off.

[11] St. Matt. xi. 9.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Funda Nos in Pace.

1. Consider the first peace necessary for us, in which we are to be established by the Blessed Virgin, namely, peace with God, which is taken away by mortal sin, and made firm by justifying grace. Here reflect how often, and in how many ways, and very grievous ways, by waging war with the Son of Mary, being ready as the Apostle says, "to crucify Him again,"[12] you have lost this peace by losing the grace of God. Mourn over your blindness; humble yourself; and purpose firmly to fly those things which have led to the loss of this peace.

2. Consider the second peace necessary, namely, with our neighbours, which, as it is cherished by mutual kindness, constant benevolence, and a habit of always interpreting things in the most favourable manner, so is it broken by dislikes, censures, reproaches, neglect of mutual assistance, and refusal to grant the just petitions of our neighbours. When therefore you ask of the Blessed Virgin to be established in this peace, see whether your actions agree with this petition, for he who in his deeds neglects that which he seeks in his prayers, shows himself by deed not to desire that thing which by word or affection he desires. See how it is with you, and put away everything contrary to this peace.

3. Consider the third peace necessary, namely, with our own conscience, which peace may be

[12] Heb. vi. 6.

disturbed in two ways—(1) by deliberate venial sin; (2) by the vehement motions of inordinate affection, arising from the mere want of due mortification. From these sources it is impossible that there should not spring a bitter anguish of conscience, and therefore the destruction of the sweetness of peace. Examine if it be so with you; deplore it; ask pardon of God; beg for help from the Mother of God; and promise amendment.

4. Consider the firmness necessary for the preservation of this three-fold peace. It should be such as to deserve the appellation *established*, and to become as it were the solid foundation of the spiritual edifice, which should yield under no pressure of adversity, labour, evil tongue, bad example, or difficulties. Think whether you be thus firmly established; see wherein you are not, and why you are not; deplore your condition; and not only by frequent and ardent prayers, but by your most earnest endeavours, by diligent study and good works, call upon the Mother of God to establish you in peace.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider that the Religious state is like the boat of Christ, and think over the advantages which a ship laden with precious wares possesses and confers. From each gather pious affections of gratitude towards God for this benefit, and of love for your vocation. Learn how you have to live, to be able to sail in this boat.

2. Consider the various motions of waves and storms, by which in this life both our boat and we its navigators must be tossed, and from all these considerations gather some fruit for the practical regulation of your actions, examining what may help you in temptations, and what may instruct you to prevent or to conquer all temptations and trials.

3. Consider that the most excellent means of conquering temptation is ardent, frequent, and assiduous prayer to God, and a prayer full of great trust. So the Disciples, when "the boat was covered with waves, awoke Jesus, saying, Lord, save us, we perish!"[1] See how ardent, how frequent, how full of hope, is your prayer, and if it truly proceeds from you as from a good and faithful servant of God, Whom you may indeed call your Lord, not in words but by deeds. If there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider the power of Christ in that, when He commanded the winds and sea there was a great calm. Congratulate your Lord on His great power; admire it, praise it, and consider yourself blessed in serving a God of such great strength. Think also of your happiness in receiving as your food One so powerful, Who thus mercifully and intimately nourishes you. Tell Him, now that He is coming to you, of the winds and waves whereby your soul and heart are assailed, begging from Him a salutary help, that there may be in you such calm as He knows to be for your health.

[1] St. Mark viii. 24.

MONDAY.

1. Consider Jesus when He beholds Nathanael coming to Him, and says of him—"Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile."[2] Look at the eyes of your Lord, sweetly beholding Nathanael. Congratulate him, seek with a holy ambition for similar affection from Christ. Think what a great benefit it is, and see if there be in you any cause or inducement for such affection. If there be anything contrary thereto, remove it.

2. Consider the words of Christ respecting Nathanael—"Behold a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile." Ponder well the sense of these words, see whether they can be said of you, and if you find anything contrary to them, whether in your thoughts, intentions, words, and works, strive to amend.

3. Consider the simplicity of Nathanael, which caused Christ to praise him without hesitation in his hearing. For you see how Nathanael, having heard these words of Christ, said—"Whence knowest Thou me?" Endeavour to be such that you may safely and without detriment hear your own praises. See whether it be so with you, and strive that it may be so.

4. Consider the answer of Christ to Nathanael—"Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee." Take occasion to reflect upon the eyes of Christ, everywhere beholding us and all things belonging to us, in our chambers, in our hiding-places, in the dark, with others, in soli-

[2] St. John i. 47.

tude, &c., and learn at least to reverence the eyes of Christ your Lord as you reverence the eyes of any man in authority. And that which you would do, or not do, before the eyes of men, do or avoid before the eyes of God.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the irreverence of the Jews towards the Temple, in which they dared to sell oxen, sheep, and doves. In pondering over the indignity of this action, see if there be not worse done by you in the Temple. For that was a necessary sale of necessary things. Far otherwise are the sins committed in prayer, and in other ways, in presence of the most Holy Eucharist. Examine, therefore, whether you deserve not a just punishment from Christ for more serious offences.

2. Consider the zeal of Christ, Who, not by words alone, but by a scourge of small cords, drove all the sellers out of the Temple, with the sheep and oxen, and poured out the money of the changers, and overthrew their tables. Which actions do you reflect on, apart from the Person of Christ, and learn not to ascribe everything to inordinate anger which appears to you evil, but with a better interpretation, to ascribe such actions to justice. Examine your own judgments, whether they be such.

3. Consider the gentleness of Christ in punishing, Who, although it was easier to find a staff, than to tie together cords or ropes, preferred the latter in casting these unworthy men out of the Temple. Imitate Him whenever you have to punish your

neighbour, whether in your mind only, or by word or deed, that in all things the sweetness of Christ may shine forth, as much as possible, without detriment to the general good.

4. Consider for what reasons He did not cast out the doves, nor display so much severity towards those who sold them, but only said—"Take these things hence, and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic."[3] And applying these thoughts to yourself, strive to profit by them.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the first reason why Christ our Lord called His Body a temple—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. . . . But He spoke of the temple of His Body."[4] Truly indeed, as the Temple is a place destined for the worship of God, so was the Body of Christ, wherein God was perpetually worshipped. Think by what means God was worshipped therein, with what affection, what perseverance, with what sweet savour to God Himself, and then compare your own body with the Body of Christ. See whether there be any resemblance, and spur yourself on in this respect to the imitation of Christ.

2. Consider the second reason for this name. Never was anything profane, anything impure, anything light, anything idle, displayed or performed by the Body of Christ, or anything that would be unsuitable to the Temple of God. Admire the beauty, the brightness, the excellence of this spiritual

[3] St. John ii. 16. [4] St. John ii. 19, 21.

temple. Compare therewith the very opposite condition of the temple of your own body; be ashamed, mourn, and amend.

3. Consider the third reason for this name. As the Temple of God had a totally different exterior form and appearance from all other buildings, so was the exterior disposition of the Body of Christ different from the customs of other persons. Think over the principal exterior actions of His Body, and compare them with your own, that, perceiving the difference, you may first weep, and then amend.

4. Consider the fourth reason for this name. As the Temple of Jerusalem more than once suffered great injury, and was even altogether destroyed several times, so for your sake the Body of Jesus Christ often suffered many bitter things, when He afflicted Himself voluntarily for your sins, when the Jews tormented Him, and when He was finally put to a most cruel death. Learn hence how sweet should be to you all suffering, whether for Christ's sake or for your many sins. Why, then, do you shun all trials of the flesh and the senses? Why do you bear them with a discontented spirit? Why do you not desire them with all your heart? Blush, weep, and conform yourself to Christ your Lord. And return Him ardent thanks Who offered Himself to the Eternal Father as the Temple upon which you have now meditated.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the zeal of St. John the Baptist, who hesitated not to admonish Herod respecting all his

evil deeds. Wherein, having considered the circumstances of Herod, and then of those delinquents whom charity sometimes calls on you to admonish, acknowledge that you might much more freely and easily correct your neighbour. Think how far this is done by you; acknowledge how many evils both to yourself and others have been caused by your neglect of this duty, and strive to amend.

2. Consider the manner adopted by St. John in reproving Herod. He refrained from reproachful words, and from all bitterness, and displayed no sign of a disturbed mind. But he said—"It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."[5] If, therefore, because he was not the superior of Herod, he reproved his crime so mildly, how much more does it become you to reprove the lighter faults of your equals without bitter words, how much less does it become you to entertain a vindictive spirit. Examine into your conduct, and correct what is amiss.

3. Consider the good disposition of Herod in certain things, for "when he heard John he did many things, and heard him willingly," although St. John exposed and reproved his serious defects. Think upon this, comparing yourself, who are esteemed good, with the impious Herod, and endeavour at least to profit by his example.

4. Consider for what cause Herodias sought revenge, when "she laid snares for John, and sought to put him to death." It was because he hindered her evil deeds. This conduct is imitated by those who are angry when hindered in evil by the direct or indirect overthrow of their designs. Weigh well

[5] St Mark vi. 18.

the bad effects of this sin; see if such be in you, and strive to amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the most merciful Lord Jesus fatigued with His journey on foot, and sitting, as St. John says, "thus on the well."[6] Ponder with tender affection of soul these words—"Jesus, therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well. It was about the sixth hour." Look at Him with the eyes of your soul, sitting thus on the well; look how He sat there, think why He sat there, and for whom He thus wearied Himself. Return Him thanks, excite in yourself the desire to work daily for Him, and to suffer fatigue for Him in your ordinary actions, and endeavour to make progress.

2. Consider the humility of our good Jesus, Who disdained not to say to the sinful woman drawing water—"Give Me to drink." Meditate on the thirst of Christ, and on its cause, namely, yourself for whom He laboured so hard. Meditate on the poverty of Christ, Who could not even get water without the help of others. Consider His frugality, for He would not quench His thirst with a costly beverage, but with the meanest of all. Then elicit many pious affections and excite in yourself, now an ardent affection towards Him, and now towards such sufferings as you may have to bear for Him.

3. Consider the candour of spirit of that happy Samaritan woman, saying to Christ—"How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask to drink of me who am a

[6] St. John iv. 6.

Samaritan woman? For the Jews do not communicate with the Samaritans." O happy woman, of whom, although a Samaritan and a sinner, Christ, the King of the Jews, yet begs a little water. Think how often Christ begs from thee something which He desires more earnestly than He did of old that water from the well. What do you answer? How do you act? Think upon this, and see what it behoves you to say and to do.

4. Consider the answer of our most sweet Saviour —"If thou didst know the gift of God, and Who He is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him and He would have given thee living water." Meditate on this with pious affection, apply it to yourself, consider it as said to you, and gather from it some help for the amendment of your actions.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Mutans Evæ Nomen.

1. Consider, as regards God Himself, how the Mother of God changed the name of Eve, in acting so differently from Eve. For Eve disobeyed the only and the first commandment of God; but Mary kept all the commandments of God, so as never to commit even a venial sin. Herein admire the plenitude of God's grace in Mary; congratulate her, bewail all your sins, and strive to be as far as possible free from even venial sins. Beg this from God through this better Eve.

2. Consider, with regard to the devil, how differently Mary acted from Eve, for Eve easily yielded to

the first advice of the devil, not urged even with much force, but Mary never yielded to his counsels. See how often you obey the devil in things which at first sight appear worse than the eating of that apple by Eve. And yet you will pass for a child, not of Eve, but of Mary. Be ashamed, mourn, and promise amendment to your most holy Mother.

3. Consider, with regard to her spouse, St. Joseph, how differently Mary acted from Eve; for Eve destroyed her husband, led him into sin, robbed him of the grace of God. Mary did the very contrary. See, hence, how much to be detested are the evil counsels which incautious friends suggest to one another. See how often from a thing which appears more trifling than the taste of one apple, there spring forth incredible evils. See how often one spark will kindle a great fire. Therefore avoid all such. Examine how far you are liable to these defects, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider, with regard to other men, how differently Mary acted from Eve; for Eve, although she was called the "mother of all the living,"[8] destroyed them all by original sin, of which she was the cause; but Mary brought forth the life of salvation for all, and thereby is the Mother of the living. Consider by what means she gives this life, and gather from each consideration some pious affections.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider for what reason good men in the Church are called by Christ "good seed."[1] And

[8] Gen. iii. 20. [1] St. Matt. xiii. 38.

reflecting on the qualities belonging to good seed, see whether you may be reckoned in the number of the sons of God. Recognize then the duties required of you.

2. Consider for what reasons wicked men in the Church are called cockle, and applying them to your own actions, return thanks to God if you are not such as may be numbered with the cockle: mourn, and resolve to amend, if any quality of the cockle be found in you.

3. Consider that the cause of the cockle springing up amongst the wheat, namely, amongst good men, is sleep, which is usually explained to be the sleep of the Pastors of the Church. Examine yourself before God, whether you conform yourself to the spirit of Christ in tacitly disapproving this negligence of ecclesiastical Superiors, and demanding vigilance; or whether, on the contrary, you approve and desire this negligence. This you will easily discover, by considering with what spirit and affection you accepted those things demanded of you by the customs, rules, and regulations of your Order, and enjoined by the vigilance of Superiors.

4. Consider the manifold good seed which Jesus Christ sows in holy souls, who receive Him worthily in the Blessed Eucharist. Consider whether this seed appears in you and brings forth wheat. Elicit such affections as are suited to the state of your soul, whether of thanksgiving for the fructifying of this seed, or of confusion, grief, and the desire of amendment, on account of the wilful sterility of your heart.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the remedy against jealousies, whether in others or in yourself, given by St. John to those who came, saying, "He to Whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptizeth, and all men come to Him."[2] To whom he said, "A man cannot receive anything unless it be given him from Heaven." Thus truly, he who considers the good things of others as given by God does not envy, but rejoices, and humbly disposes himself for the like gifts. Examine how you behave in this respect, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

2. Consider the remedy given by St. John, for rendering sweet to us all those bitter things, out of which, when borne with an even mind, we are taught that God's glory will arise. "My joy," he says, "therefore is fulfilled," (inasmuch as leaving me, all run to Christ). "He must increase, but I must decrease." God truly grows in you when you decrease and humble yourself for His sake. See in how much this may justly apply to you, and excite in yourself a generous spirit to endure all things grievous and hard for the love of your Lord.

3. Consider the evil sign of all those who spend their words in trifles. "He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh."[3] Ponder how true this is; see whether or no these words may be said of you, and try to profit by them.

4. Consider your happiness, that you have a generous God, and His Son for your Lord and Mediator,

[2] St. John iii. 26. [3] St. John iii. 51.

by Whom all good things are drawn to you out of the hand of His Eternal Father—"For God doth not give the spirit by measure."[4] Behold the liberality of God! "The Father loveth the Son, and He hath given all things into His hand."[5] Behold the power of the Son of your Lord! Take pains therefore to be dear both to the Father and to His Son, in order that you may be a participator in many good gifts. Examine how you are aiming at this; think well on the obstacles to it; and dispose yourself fervently to the reception of God's greater gifts.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider for what reason the grace communicated by Christ to those who belong to Him, is called by Him, "A fountain of water springing up into life everlasting."[6] Examine why it is called a fountain, and not a fountain of any kind of water, but of "water springing up into life everlasting," and having applied the thought to yourself, and considered whether the signs of this grace be present in or absent from your soul, endeavour to draw profit.

2. Consider the pious affection of the Samaritan woman, who, having heard these words of Christ, said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw." Which words apply to yourself. Say the same to Christ in a spiritual sense, and resolve for the future not to seek

[4] St. John iii. 34. [5] St. John iii. 35.
[6] St. John iv. 14.

the favour of men more than the favour of God. Weep for the past, beg pardon, and amend.

3. Consider the manner in which God is to be adored, as prescribed by Christ to the Samaritan woman—"True adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth, and the Father seeketh such." Consider how useful and how necessary this is; strive to be such an adorer, and if you be not such, mourn, and beg for pardon.

4. Consider the astonishment of the Disciples of Christ, who, having found Him speaking with the Samaritan woman, "wondered that He talked with the woman." At the same time examine into the cause of this astonishment, and having applied the thought to yourself, and compared Christ with yourself, gather some examples whereon to form your own actions.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the darkness of sin, in which many are so involved that the light of justice is neither seen nor loved, but the mind is enveloped in the wickedness of the world. Here look into your mind, humble yourself, and put yourself below the devils, who have not offended God by so many sins. Give thanks to God, Who has infused the light of justice into your heart, see what you should do to preserve and increase it; beg this also from God.

2. Consider the darkness of infidelity, with which so many were afflicted before the advent of Christ, and with which many are yet afflicted—heathens, Jews, heretics, who are destitute of the light of

faith. Compassionate them, burn with the desire of drawing them out of darkness; thank God, Who has drawn you out of it, and see what you owe to Him for this light, without which "it is impossible to please God"[7] and be saved.

3. Consider the darkness of many in the world, who do not see the advantage of the Religious state, and consequently do not embrace it. Recognize how many benefits have come from hence to you, who, penetrated with the light of God, have relinquished the world. Give thanks to your enlightener, reflect with what gratitude of mind you ought to cherish this benefit, how much you ought to esteem your vocation, and if, perchance, you find your esteem of it diminished, and your affection towards it not so intense as formerly, examine into the causes of this, and into the evils which may come from it, and endeavour to profit.

4. Consider the darkness of many tepid Religious, who do not see how much better are the rewards given for acts of humiliation and patience, of prayers, spiritual conversations, mortification of the palate, senses, and self-love, than those recreations and pleasures which are derived from contrary acts. See if you be one of this number, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the question put by the disciple of John to Christ our Lord—"Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but thy disciples do not fast?"[8]

[7] Heb. xi. 14. [8] St. Matt. ix. 14.

In pondering these words, remark the similar censure passed by many malevolent persons, cavillers at your Order, because it has not, as is the custom of other Orders, special fasts besides those common to the Church; it is content, namely, with the common life of Christ. Give thanks to God that you follow the rule of life of Christ and His disciples, provided, apart from fasts, you adorn your life with those virtues wherewith the most holy disciples of Christ our Lord adorned their lives, that the evil minded could find nothing to cavil at, except the omission of certain Pharisaical customs regarding the frequent washing of the hands. See, therefore, if you be such as this, and form your own life on the pattern of theirs.

2. Consider the meekness of Christ, Who, although He could have pointed out in His questioners defects which deserved more serious censures, did not do so, lest He should put them to shame, and bear the appearance of resentment. See how you answer those who judge evil of your actions, how you think, or even speak of them, and if you have been accustomed to discover any bitterness towards them, for the glory of God leave it off in future.

3. Consider how dangerous it is to search into the actions of others, or to censure them, or curiously to investigate even the causes of the imperfect deeds of others, how very injurious it is, as well to the good name of others, as your own peace, and to purity of conscience, and how many evils it brings with it. So may you more vehemently detest this habit, and never fall into it.

4. Consider the answer of Christ in favour of the credit of His disciples—"Can the children of the

marriage fast as long as the bridegroom is with them?"[9] Where He both speaks honourably of their persons, and proves their innocence by a reason adapted to the understanding of the interrogators. See whether you treat the affairs of others in the same way, and try to conform yourself to Christ in this respect.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider another reason brought forward by Christ in defence of His disciples, to the end that they who were more given to fasts might think well of His disciples, who at that time did not fast—"The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast in those days."[10] Thus is the good name of His own defended by Christ from His Heart, and not for form's sake merely, that the adverse party might be rendered entirely favourable to them. See whether you do the same in similar matters, and recognize what it is your duty to do.

2. Consider, moreover, the similitude brought forward for the more complete defence of the Apostolic life—"No man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment; otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old."[11] Herein look with a tender affection of spirit on the charity of Christ so fully pleading the cause of His disciples. Thank Him; congratulate His disciples on such a Patron;

[9] St. Mark ii. 19. [10] St. Mark ii. 20.
[11] St. Luke v. 36.

love, adore, and try to imitate this charity of Christ; but above all, recognize thoroughly how happy is that soul which is so dear to Christ that it has Him for a defender, even without the asking; and see what obstacle prevents you from having Him as your defender.

3. Consider the words of Christ in themselves, and what it is to put a piece torn from a new garment, with injury to it, upon an old garment. May it not perhaps be to destroy thy old simplicity, fervour, obedience, observance of rules, by new customs, and new political and secular maxims? Consider if you do this; and if there be anything to correct, and to bring back to its former state, give yourself to the work without delay.

4. Consider other words of Christ brought forward in defence of His disciples—"No man putteth new wine into old bottles; otherwise the new wine would break the bottles, and it would be spilled, and the bottles would be lost. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. And no man drinking old hath presently a mind to new; for he saith, The old is better."[12] Apply all these things spiritually, either to your state or your actions, and endeavour to profit.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Solve Vincla Reis.

1. Consider the power of the Mother of God, which she benignantly displays to many, by loosing the chains of sin. This she does by obtaining for

[12] St. Luke v. 37—39.

us both good inspirations, by which we are withdrawn from our sins, a thorough hatred of sins, a real flight from them, and their expiation through the Sacraments, together with other means. On which account give her thanks for her goodness towards men, and beg her always to show it also to you. Lastly, examine how you cooperate with the Mother of God, who desires to loosen the chains of your sins, which you will know by seeing how you behave with regard to the inspirations and other means, whereby the Mother of God wishes to withdraw you from your sins. If there be anything to amend, amend it.

2. Consider how even the smallest sins are chains with respect to God, Whose hands they in some manner tie, so that He cannot bestow on us those gifts which He would bestow if He found our hearts pure and free from sin. This you will recognize, both from various examples, and from the nature and the ways of God, Who demands, and justly demands, clean vessels for His precious gifts. Entreat God, therefore, to cleanse you and to confer His gifts abundantly upon you.

3. Consider that even slight sins are to you as chains both with respect to yourself and to other creatures; for in the first place the devil strives to draw men by them, as if by cords, to mortal sins; in the next place, many sins, especially external sins, are calculated to check goodwill and friendship towards superiors, equals, and inferiors, so that affection is not all, or at least not so fully bestowed on them, as it would be if they shunned sin. Lastly, they bind and cramp the sinner himself, that he runs not swiftly and with a tranquil heart in the

way of God, but remains in one place and treads barefooted in anguish of conscience as on thorns, with no progress, or but very little. From which considerations you may draw a great hatred of all kinds of sin, and endeavour to shun them.

4. Consider how justly you should call yourself guilty, on account both of your many offences and of your debts towards God; and having considered these, at least in general, with humble affection and full of grief, be confounded before the Divine Majesty, beg pardon, and ardently ask the Blessed Virgin to loose these your chains, and those of other sinners, repeating often with a great and ardent affection of soul—*Solve vincla reis.*

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

1. Consider the lowliness of evangelical doctrine which is compared to a little grain of mustard-seed, because it recommends the study of a most profound humility, as well interior as exterior. Hence it forbids seeking the first seats in the synagogue and at feasts, it commands offering of the other cheek to the striker, it forbids us to judge our neighbour, it enjoins on us to live in fear of a fall, to humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God, to despise no one, to practise obedience, to honour those in power, and the like. See whether you observe these things, and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the sharpness of evangelical doctrine, stinging our sensuality like mustard when it orders us to follow the narrow way to Heaven, to renounce all things, even ourselves, to hate even our relations

when they hinder what is good, to bear trials patiently, and the like. See whether you have these things at heart, that you may know whether you have a relish for this bitter food prepared by Christ.

3. Consider the utility of this seed, because its sharpness is more profitable than mustard to the body, whether in causing tears of devotion, through pious reflections, or in purging the soul from noxious humours, in which corrupt nature takes delight. Ponder, therefore, the utility which the observance of the evangelical counsels chiefly brings with it, and see how worthless is that pleasure for the sake of which you shun the trials of the Cross of Christ and of Religious life, that so you may learn to mortify your sensual inclinations, so opposed to Religion and the Cross.

4. Consider how much the food of the Holy Eucharist, which you are accustomed so often to receive, can and ought to help you to relish this evangelical mustard, that is to say, evangelical perfection, bitter indeed to the diseased palate, but sweet to the healthy one. Why, therefore, do you not profit, feeding on the Author of evangelical doctrine, drinking of the fountain of perfection recommended therein? Inquire into the causes, mourn over whatever may be wrong, seek the remedies, and use them.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the two blind men who followed Christ as He passed by, "Crying out and saying, Have mercy on us, O Son of David."[1] Join yourself

[1] St. Matt. ix. 27.

to them in heart and soul, and implore with ardent affection His mercy, so necessary for you.

2. Consider the manifold, or at least four-fold, blindness of your heart and soul. For thus you live, as though not perceiving, (1) that the sufferings of Purgatory are greater than any whatsoever of those which often unreasonably disturb you, and draw you into sins which have to be expiated in Purgatory by the most severe torments; (2) that spiritual and supernatural goods, such as progress in sanctity, are better than natural goods, such as studies, to which latter, however, you give more attention than to the former; (3) that the eternal goods prepared by God for every one of our meritorious works, are better than the temporal goods for the sake of which you omit so many occasions of merit; (4) that better is the favour of God than the favour of men, to please whom you often offend God. And as this blindness is voluntary, cast it away from you.

3. Consider the perseverance of the good blind man, who not only followed Christ as He passed by, but also came into the very house where He dwelt, and then obtained the desired benefit of restored sight. Thus pious importunity finds favour with God. Have it at heart yourself, if you desire efficaciously to obtain those things which you ask from God.

4. Consider the gratitude of the blind men contending with the humility of Christ, for He forbade them to publish the miracle, and they, "going out, spread His fame abroad in all that country." Learn from hence to hide your virtues from men, without, however, prejudicing the good example by which

you are bound to shine, to propagate the glory of Christ, and to draw as many as possible to His love and service.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the patience which Christ urges on His disciples. "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other."[2] Ponder diligently the authority of the Person of Christ Who urges this, and the spirit with which He urges it, and compare the injuries of which you complain with this counsel of Christ, for you will find them much less than a blow. Be ashamed, therefore, of your manifold acts of impatience, and amend.

2. Consider the meekness which Christ demands from you—"And if a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him."[3] See how you observe this doctrine in your conversation with your equals, and in the accusations or complaints brought against you before your Superiors; and having bewailed any defects you can find, determine what you have to do for the future.

3. Consider the charity recommended by Christ towards our equals—"Whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him two. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away."[4] On the other hand, compare your manner of rendering or refusing those services of Religious charity towards your brethren which you

[2] St. Matt. v. 39. [3] St. Matt. v. 40.
[4] St. Matt. v. 41, 42.

may render without prejudice to Religious discipline, and see how you ought to act so as to obey the admonitions of Christ.

4. Consider the motives for which it behoves thee to be patient, meek, and charitable, according as Christ here commands; be inflamed with an ardent desire to exercise yourself in these virtues in all the occasions which may occur.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the poverty recommended by Christ, "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth;"[5] and return thanks to our Lord that you are withdrawn by Him from the world, in which temporal treasures are loved and collected. But see that in the Religious state you collect not other things, even though they be not such great things, namely, superfluities in food, dress, furniture. Look, therefore, at all that belongs to you, and, for the love of Christ in poverty, cut off all those things that in meditation, under the eyes of His Divine Majesty, you shall find to be really superfluous and not necessary.

2. Consider the three evils appertaining to the riches and treasures of the world, namely, *rust*, *moth*, and *thieves*, whereby, in different ways, all the goods of the world are destroyed. Rejoice, therefore, that you have withdrawn your heart from them, and take heed lest, even yet, the remains of these goods may survive in your inordinate affections towards them.

[5] St. Matt. vi. 19.

3. Consider the goods of the Religious life, which, unless you will have it so, nothing can injure, neither the *rust* of bad example, which, like rust, disfigures our works, nor the *moth* of interior tepidity, by which our good works are insensibly eaten up; nor the *thief*, that is, the evil of vain glory, carrying off our merits. Look into your actions; see whether they be free from these three evils, and strive to make them free.

4. Consider in what place or what thing is your treasure, for there it is "where thy heart is," that is, your affection. Now, your affection is in that to which your eyes are turned, on which you most frequently speak, towards which your desires are directed, and regarding which you feel no weariness or aversion. And because no one is so foolish as to treasure up dirt, weeds, or twigs, but all treasure precious things, see what you ought to accumulate as your treasures.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the love of Christ urging us to lay up for ourselves treasure in Heaven. Give Him thanks for so much solicitude for your welfare. Reflect how ludicrous, how pernicious, how foolish it is not to follow the counsels of Christ, instilling into us the care of ourselves, a thing which we should have at heart, even without any external monitor, and ardently strive to excite yourself to a holy and spiritual avarice regarding real treasures.

2. Consider the first kind of treasure, namely, the purity of all your works. This purity he has, whose

works are all free from every deliberate, even venial, sin. Think well upon the excellence of this treasure; beg of our Lord Jesus, the fountain of purity, to help you; bewail your past defects, and shun them for the future.

3. Consider the second kind of treasure, namely, the excellence of each of our works. For this we ought to strive with all our efforts, so that all of them may be as perfect as possible, and as like as may be to those of the great Saints, and this both in the loftiness of their supernatural end, their interior and seraphic fervour and intention, and the manner and circumstances of all their works. See what is wanting to you. On the one hand, be ashamed of yourself; on the other, rouse yourself by the example of worldlings, who perform their worldly actions as perfectly as they can, from the mere desire of gain and temporal enjoyment.

4. Consider the third kind of treasure, namely, the degrees of celestial glory which will correspond to the multitude of merits in this life. For merits are accumulated, both from the multitude of those trials which a person meets with here, from the good actions which he even proposes to perform, and from the purity of his intention. See, therefore, how fervent, how assiduous, how unfailing you should be in storing up merits. To this, if you be not excited by the desire of God's glory, and of so great good to yourself, at least be put to shame by the example of prudent men of the world; for it is a disgrace to the freeborn servant of God if he permit them to surpass him.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the office of your eyes as expressed in these words of Christ—"The lamp of thy body is thy eye,"[6] that is to say, you should use it where it is required, just as we use a lamp, not by day when it is not needed, nor in places where there is light, but in the dark. Examine, therefore, what use you make of your eyes; and having considered the evils which a bad use of them has brought to many, and perhaps to yourself, be cautious.

2. Consider that your eye is a sure indication of your interior state, for by it, as by a lamp, you can know your heart and discern by what vice or affection it is tried, of what good it is in want; for those things which the heart loves, inordinately or ordinately, it looks at with the eye, just as it turns away from that which it detests. Examine, therefore, into the movements of your eyes, and by these indications regulate your interior state according to the divine will.

3. Consider the benefit which others also receive from the good use of your eyes; for a modest and pious eye is to others also a lamp through the brightness of the good example which it diffuses. It points out the way to him who looks attentively; and to God Himself it is also a pleasing object, as well as a sign of the indwelling of heavenly light. See, therefore, what it behoves you to do, that to others also you may be a lamp by means of your eyes.

[6] St. Matt. vi. 22.

4. Consider those words of Christ—"If the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself how great shall it be?"[7] From these words be inspired to examine the interior rules that you follow regarding the mode of acting with superiors, with equals, with inferiors, with domestics and externs, lest, perhaps, these should prove to be darkness rather than light. They will deserve this latter appellation if you find them contrary to the example of Christ and His Saints, to your rules, and to the admonitions of your directors. If, therefore, you find anything that is evil cast it out.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Profer Lumen Cæcis.

1. Consider your first blindness, which you share with seculars, who practically do not see how great is the injury offered to God by any, even the smallest venial sin. The greatness of this injury you will perceive, if you ascend by degrees from mean persons to those who are more exalted, and thus come up to God Himself, Who is infinitely more excellent; for as one person is more worthy than another, so the offence is greater in proportion as he who is offended by it is the more worthy, and so on, *ad infinitum*. And yet how often have you dared to offend this God of infinite majesty! you who, nevertheless, are often afraid to offend your equal—nay, even your inferior! Is not this an execrable blindness? Blush, and bewail it.

[7] St. Matt. vi. 23.

2. Consider the second blindness, which is common to you with tepid Religious, who have come into Religion to the end that they may live more perfectly than seculars, and who nevertheless live less so than many of them. For how many pious women are occupied in prayer, without weariness, for a longer time, and more frequently than you are? How many servants obey more exactly than you do? How many workmen labour more diligently and assiduously for the hope of earthly gain, than you for the sake of heavenly? and so in other things. Ponder on this carefully; be ashamed, and purpose amendment.

3. Consider your third blindness, which you share with tepid Religious of your own Order, who, although their object is to devote themselves to perfection by imitating the life of Christ, yet are far from really doing this. Is not this a great blindness, to prefer the sin-stained and dissolute rather than Jesus? Blush, false imitator of Christ and amend.

4. Consider your fourth blindness, which you share with most men; for nearly all esteem in practice temporal things more than eternal ones, and regard the favour, praise, and benefits of men, more than the favour, praise, and benefits of God. We labour more to obtain temporal things than eternal; we grieve more if we incur some temporal loss, or lose some temporal good, than if we risk our eternity. Be ashamed, therefore, and with the deepest affection of your heart, cry out to the Mother of God—*Profer lumen cæcis.*

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

1. Consider the mercy of God towards all men whom He calls to work in His vineyard, that by their labours they may acquire the recompense of the Kingdom of Heaven. Yes, that by small labours, undertaken with His help, they may gain an eternal kingdom, full of all that is good. Having brought these benefits to your mind, and considered them with a great affection of soul, return the heartiest thanks to so great a Benefactor, rouse yourself to work for the future, and deplore your past idleness.

2. Consider the labours to which you are called, nothing more than the ordinary works which you have to do by your rules, or the command of your Superiors. Examine how you do them; how freely, fervently, assiduously, perfectly; see how worthy they are of that prize of supreme value prepared for you in Heaven; and if there be anything to correct in them, observe it, and amend.

3. Consider your happiness in being called to these labours from your earliest years; reflect how great is this benefit, and having thanked God, take care not to be surpassed by those who are called to work at a mature age; but rather, take heed to surpass them; for you, indeed, are called at a more advantageous period, and at an age more flexible to good. See how it is with you in this respect, and if there be anything wrong, deplore and correct it.

4. Consider the many rewards which God bestows on good labourers, even in this life, which you will

recognize if you call to memory the gifts which He has granted to the Saints. Pray, therefore, earnestly to the Lord of the vineyard, Whom you receive in the most Holy Eucharist, that He may make you a good labourer aud cultivator of His vineyard, and one worthy of great rewards in Heaven.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the reasons why the Church, as well as the soul of any good person, may justly be called the vineyard of Christ, having various branches, clusters, and grapes. Considering these, mystically gather therefrom some spiritual fruit.

2. Consider that it is necessary for a vine to be in soft, not hard, ground, otherwise it will bear no fruit. Examine whether you readily obey the inspirations of God and the admonitions of your Superiors, or whether such obedience be hard and difficult to you. And having bewailed your defects, strive to amend them.

3. Consider that it is necessary, in the second place, for the superfluous shoots to be pruned away. In like manner, to make progress in the vineyard of the Lord, it is necessary to cut off superfluous business and occupations. Examine whether there be anything in you to cut off, and use the spiritual pruning-knife, that you may offer to God the wished for fruit.

4. Consider that it is necessary, in the third place, for the production of good branches, that the vine should be raised up, and cling to a pole or a tree,

and not creep upon the ground. The vine of our soul is raised up by prayer, which is the elevation of the soul to God; and likewise by the shunning of earthly things, even those that are not evil. See if it be so with you, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider whether, on account of the indolent cultivation of your soul, those words may apply to you which were said to the labourers before they were taken to work in the vineyard, "Why stand you here all the day idle?" This you will know by examining your principal actions; for if they fall short of the requisite goodness in any one respect they are not profitable, and hence they are idle; for as theologians say, that any action may be good it must be good in all respects, to make it bad it need be bad only in one respect. Therefore, if you be living idly, mourn and amend; if otherwise, thank God, and strive to make more and more progress.

2. Consider the reward prepared by God for the diligent cultivators of His vineyard. It is greater than every earthly reward, whether you consider its duration, which is eternal, or its supreme and pre-eminent advantages, or any of those circumstances of gain whereby worldlings are excited to bear evils and to do good, when allured by the hope of a worldly recompense. On which account you should, with all the greater affection, labour for the sake of God in proportion as a more excellent prize awaits you.

See whether you do this, and endeavour to make progress.

3. Consider the labourers of the world, calling to mind the principal states of life, how much they suffer and do for an uncertain advantage! how much of their patrimony they spend in the Courts of Princes without remuneration! Reflect whether you, for a reward which is God Himself, and the beatific vision of God, suffer and do as much, give as much to God, spend as much for God's sake, as you can. And see what you have to do; for that certainly you should now do which you would do if you knew that you were immediately to die.

4. Consider the happiness of God's servants, who by the goodness of God, although called late to His service, or rather, beginning late to serve Him well after many years spent ill, can yet through His grace and their own ardent and indefatigable cooperation, attain to the virtues and merits of great Saints, and make amends for past negligences, "Redeeming the time,"[1] as says the Apostle. Do not then despair; if you have hitherto been negligent, arise, trust in God, do your best, cooperate earnestly, make diligent use of the aids which you have, and you shall obtain the same day's pay which great Saints have obtained.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the words of our Lord addressed to the Samaritans—"My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work."[2]

[1] Coloss. iv. 5. [2] St. John iv. 34.

Examine whether these words describe you, and endeavour so to live that truly they may apply to you.

2. Consider the patience and humility of Christ, Who being left by the Samaritan woman, remained at the well of Jacob. Here reflect on what our Lord Jesus then thought, what He did, with what an even mind He bore the leaving Him in solitude, and try to profit by these considerations.

3. Consider the fruit of our labours in Religion, to all of which, even to the meanest, these words of Christ certainly apply. "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life everlasting; that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together."[3] Having pondered upon these words, excite yourself to work hard in the vineyard of the Lord.

4. Consider the good simplicity of the Samaritans, of whom many "believed in Him, for the word of the woman giving testimony: He told me all things whatsoever I have done." Oh, how many more reasons have you for believing the words of Christ! And yet you do not obey! Reflect how disgraceful, how pernicious this is, and amend.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider how Christ delivered His doctrine in the synagogue. "For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes. And they were astonished at His doctrine."[4] On this account excite in yourself the affection of joy, and with your

[3] St. John iv. 36. [4] St. Mark i. 22.

mental ears, as though you were present, listen to Christ. Apply His doctrine to yourself, and try to profit.

2. Consider that there was then in the synagogue a man having an unclean spirit, who cried out, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know Who Thou art, the Holy One of God."[5] Ponder on each of these words, according to the second method of prayer; apply as much as possible to yourself, and draw out various pious affections.

3. Consider the efficacy of the words of Christ, for when He said, "Speak no more, and go out of the man; tearing him, the unclean spirit went out of him." Admire the power of Christ, be grateful to Him, call on Him, that He may save you also in your miseries, and on your part cooperate with Him when He works in you.

4. Consider that you are liable to many greater daily miseries than this man, who when carried away by the evil spirit, did not sin, because He was deprived of the use of reason. Hence it follows that you have more cause to blush for your voluntary faults than if you were possessed; and moreover, that you should seek with greater pains and efforts your deliverance from them, than you would seek deliverance from the devil, if, which God forbid, thou wert possessed by him. Consider whether you do this, and how, and purpose amendment.

[5] St. Mark i. 24.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the happiness of Peter and Andrew, into whose house Christ our Lord deigned to enter when He came out of the synagogue. You will see the greatness of this benefit, by comparing it with the entrance of other illustrious personages into the dwellings of the poor. Hereupon, having thought of yourself, see how much happier you are than Peter, you, who not once only, but very frequently, in a more wonderful and more affectionate manner, receive Christ, no longer mortal, in the most Blessed Eucharist. Therefore give thanks with tender affection, and think what you should offer in return for such a visit.

2. Consider the kindness of our Lord Jesus, Who, when He entered into Peter's house, "saw his wife's mother lying, and sick of a fever."[6] Here consider, as though actually present, how and with what affection of soul, with what grief, He looked on the sick woman. Thank Him; implore this His mercy for yourself, and for your spiritual diseases, far worse than that fever.

2. Consider the way in which Christ cast out the fever. "And coming to her, He lifted her up, taking her by the hand, and commanded the fever, and immediately the fever left her."[7] Here reflect that Christ comes yet oftener to you, spiritually by grace, bodily in the Holy Eucharist. He commands yet oftener your spiritual fevers. Why then are you not free from them? Inquire into the causes, mourn, and put them away.

[6] St. Matt. viii. 14. [7] St. Mark i. 31; St. Luke iv. 39.

4. Consider the gratitude of this woman when healed, for she immediately ministered to Christ and His disciples. Reflect wherein she ministered, and how. Examine how you minister to Him, you who have nevertheless obtained more benefits from Him, and having compared the lesser benefits with the greater, try to draw profit.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Profer Lumen Cæcis.

1. Consider the first light, which, though we are not destitute of it, we nevertheless often neglect to use, acting as though we had it not. It is the light of nature, infused into us by God with the rational soul, by which even heathens are taught what to do and what to avoid, whose dogma is, "What thou wouldst not have done to thyself, do not thou to others," and *vice versâ*. Examine how you observe this, and having noticed and bewailed your many defects in this respect, correct them.

2. Consider the light of faith which is in you, and which, nevertheless, is often not visible, that light which teaches that God and the things of Heaven are nobler than men and the things of earth. And yet you seek the latter more than the former; you bewail the loss of the latter more than the loss of the former. Be ashamed, and amend thy life.

3. Consider the light of the Religious state, which the particular laws of your Institute offer you, whereby you are taught what things are to be done, what left undone, in which light you often do not walk, but

transgress the laws. Note therefore the principal points where you most frequently fail, and amend.

4. Consider the light of your own conscience, which God instructs in certain matters by special lights and inspirations, as well with regard to the avoidance of vice as the practice of virtue. Oh, how often you neglect to use this light! How often you do not hearken to God Who teaches you! Take heed, therefore, that you be not cast down into the yet greater darkness of sin; and beg the Blessed Virgin, Star of the Sea of this world, to preserve and increase in you this fourth light for the removal of your fourth blindness.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons the word of God is called a seed by Christ our Lord; whether on account of its continual propagation, or of its fruit, or of the necessity of cooperation from the ground, or of celestial influences, without which it can produce nothing, or for any other reason. And from hence gather some instruction for your own actions.

2. Consider whether or no the word of God be in your soul that seed which "fell by the wayside, and was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it,"[1] which, namely, the "devil taketh out of the heart, lest believing they should be saved,"[2] and endeavour to profit by this reflection.

3. Consider whether the word of God may not be to you like that seed which "fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because

[1] St. Luke viii. 5. [2] St. Luke viii. 12.

it had no moisture;" because, namely, in the time of temptation the word received before with joy is rejected. If it be so, mourn and amend.

4. Consider whether these words may be said of you—"Other some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundred fold." If it be so, thank God heartily. If not, mourn that so fruitful a seed produces such small fruit in you, and beg of Jesus Christ in the most Holy Eucharist to ripen that which He sows in you, and to enable you to bring forth all possible fruit.

MONDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons Christ, having related the parable of the seed, cried out, saying—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." For Christ our Lord did nothing without a solid reason, nor certainly would He have cried out, contrary to His own custom and to that of men in general, unless moved by some grave cause. What that might be do you examine, and from thence gather some fruit.

2. Consider your happiness and that of your brethren, to whom may be applied in a most perfect manner those words of Christ to His Apostles—"To you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they may not see, and hearing may not understand."[8] Which is true, not only with regard to seculars, but also to many Religious Orders, among whom there is not so extensive a knowledge of divine things as there is in your Order. Extol the goodness of God; give

[8] St. Luke viii. 10.

thanks; and see how faithfully and perfectly you use this knowledge for the service of God.

3. Consider what Christ our Lord said, not indeed without a mysterious meaning, of those who hearing with a perfect heart retain the word, they "bring forth fruit in patience." Why, for instance, did He not say in devotion, in charity, or any other virtue, but *in patience?* Search into this, and endeavour to profit.

4. Consider when, by what means, through whom, where, and how often God sows His seed in your heart. See whether you receive this spiritual seed in a becoming manner, always, everywhere, and from all; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider Christ, after He had gone through Galilee, retiring into a desert place to pray. Wherein reflect on two points: (1) how Christ, endowed as He was with the highest gift of prayer, nevertheless avoided those occasions of distraction which a less solitary life presents, that you may also learn to seek for aids to a recollected prayer; (2) how Christ prayed in that desert place interiorly and exteriorly, and do you imitate Him.

2. Consider the pious affection of the crowd towards Christ, when "they sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them."[4] Thank them for prizing the Lord so much; rejoice with your Lord at this esteem of the people. See whether you seek Christ with equal affection,

[4] St. Luke iv. 42.

both in the most Blessed Sacrament and in Heaven, and endeavour to draw profit from the thought.

3. Consider the benevolence of Christ Who, "laying His hands" on all who were sick, "healed them."[5] Rejoice that you have so powerful a Lord, Who can dispel all evil without any trouble. Excite yourself also to hope, and strive to make yourself worthy to be healed by Him.

4. Consider the affection of the sick persons who met Christ our Lord as He travelled through Galilee, or who presented themselves to be healed by Him: with what desire, namely, with what hope of cure, with what ardour they begged to be healed; and examine whether in your necessities, you too in such manner implore the help of Christ, in such manner desire your cure; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the words of a certain scribe to Christ: "Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go."[6] See whether there be in you the will to follow Christ in all things with equal affection, and having discovered various defects, which show that you are not following Christ in everything, deplore them and try to amend.

2. Consider with a tender affection of compassion those words of Christ our Lord in answer to the scribe—"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head." Grieve deeply for your most sweet Lord,

[5] St. Luke iv. 40. [6] St. Matt. viii. 19.

in such want for the love of thee, and so neglected by men. Thank Him; offer Him your heart whereon to rest His Head; and that it may be a worthy resting place, let Him see it clean from all stain and odour of sin.

3. Consider the words of another man, who said to Christ—"Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father."[7] To whom Christ answered—"Let the dead bury their dead." Hence learn how free you should be from all affection towards your relations, when Christ dissuaded a son from so pious and in some degree necessary an office towards his father, adding, "Go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." Examine how it is with you in this respect.

4. Consider the words of a third man, and the saying of Christ in answer. When a certain man said to Christ—"I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are in my house,"[8] Jesus answered him—"No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God." Ponder each of these words, and gather therefrom some holy affections.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the conditions of certain Gerasenes, who, possessed by the devil, wore no clothes, abode among the tombs, and were exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way, neither could they be bound by chains and shackles, which they frequently broke, cutting themselves also with stones. Compassionate these creatures of God, formed to His image;

[7] St. Luke ix. 59. [8] St. Luke ix. 61.

reflect upon the state of a soul possessed by the devil; see how miserable it is; and hence, passing from the less to the greater, learn how much worse is the state of a man destitute of the grace of God; that so you may fly, not only from mortal sin, but from its very shadow, as you would fly from a serpent. See whether you do this, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

2. Consider the excellence of the sanctity of Christ, Whom the devils were forced unwillingly to adore, falling at His feet in the presence of the possessed. Such ought to be the excellence of the servants of God, that even their enemies, knowing the solidity of their virtue, may be compelled to recognize and honour it. See whether it be so with you, or whether you are striving that it may be so, for the glory of your Lord and the honour of the holy Church, and try to attain this excellence.

3. Consider the petition of the possessed—"Jesus, the Son of the most high God, I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not. For He said unto him, Go out of the man thou unclean spirit."[9] This conduct is imitated by those imprudent men who, labouring under some manifest vice, strive not to get rid of it, although God urges them by secret inspirations, as well as by external means which He is wont to use. See if you are among that number, and beware of the danger.

4. Consider the tender Heart and affections of the merciful Jesus Christ, when He looks from Heaven on so many souls seduced by diabolical errors or entangled therein, and less mindful than they ought to be of perfect purity of heart. What can Christ

[9] St. Mark v. 7, 8.

think of thee, if thou be one of them? What can He think of the fruits of His merits offered for thee? Dwell upon this with humble and tender affection; adore and embrace the Heart of Christ, so desirous of thy progress; beg pardon; mourn, and seriously endeavour to amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the desire of the devils, who, having seen the herd of swine, begged Christ "that He would suffer them to enter into them."[10] Consider for what reasons they preferred to go into these animals rather than any other; learn hence what those qualities are in which devils delight and avoid them.

2. Consider the result of this entrance of the devils into the swine, for when they had entered, the herd ran down a steep place into the lake, and were drowned. This is the fruit of the devil's advice, and of every bad action; the devil certainly does injury to him who obeys his will. Prove this to thyself by examples of daily experience, and firmly resolve always to avoid that society and those actions in which there is anything displeasing to God.

3. Consider the humility of Christ, Who disdained not to have the man out of whom the devils were departed, and who was restored to his right mind, seated near Him. For when they came to Jesus, from the city and the villages, to see what had been done, "they found the man sitting at His feet." Piously contemplate Christ, and that unfortunate man sitting at His feet. Imagine what he then

[10] St. Luke viii. 32.

thought of, sitting at the feet of Christ; congratulate him, call him blessed, and strive to draw for thyself similar pious affections.

4. Consider the folly of the Gerasenes, who having seen such a great miracle of Christ, "besought Him to depart from them, for they were taken with great fear," so that, going up into the ship, He passed over to the other side. We imitate them when we wish Him to be away from us, when we refuse those things by which our sins are driven away, and by which we are healed. Reflect upon the danger and folly of this, and try never to be like the Gerasenes.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Mala Nostra Pelle.

1. Consider that our first evil is our own sinfulness, which stains the soul, and renders it hateful to God and unfit for Heaven. See for what reasons, and how greatly it is to be avoided. Excite in yourself a horror of it, and a great sorrow for past sins.

2. Consider another evil to which we are subject, namely, that of temporal punishment, which often remains after the guilt of sin has been forgiven, either in this world or in the next. See why you should strive to be ever free from this evil, and to use those means whereby it can be warded off.

3. Consider that the sins of others may be called our evil; for that sin injures others than the sinner, both at home and abroad, you may perceive by the sin of Achan and of others, on account of which

even those were punished who had not sinned. Therefore you should take heed not to injure others, and should strive that others offend not. See if you do this, and if there be anything to correct in thyself or in others, endeavour to correct it.

4. Consider how much injury is done to the public good by those evils which malicious men excite, whether in the State, or the Church, or in thy Order, that so you may kindle within yourself an ardent desire of preventing their attacks, or removing the injury. See if you do this; determine what you have to do; and beg the Mother of God to expel these evils.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

1. Consider for what reason Christ our Lord, going up to Jerusalem, when He was about to declare that stripes and death were awaiting Him, took unto Him secretly the twelve disciples only, and no one else whomsoever. Gather from this some fruit, and first of all examine by what means you may enter into such favour with Christ as to be one of His dearly loved and cherished friends.

2. Consider for what reasons, although Christ most clearly announced to His disciples that He was to be delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, spit upon, and slain, and that the third day He was to rise again, yet they "understood none of these things."[1] Did these things appear so difficult? Recognize hence how much we need the light of God; how often we fail to perceive the

[1] St. Luke xviii. 34.

disgracefulness of many evil actions, and the excellence of many good ones, and therefore are not influenced aright. Take heed, therefore, lest by your sins you put an obstacle in the way of divine light, for you are not better than the Apostles, nor more worthy than they of God's light. Reflect upon this, and endeavour to shun all sin.

3. Consider how Christ prepared Himself for His Passion by timely forethought, and conversation directed towards it. He teaches you to provide against attacks, that they may wound less severely. Therefore, having called to mind your difficulties, prepare yourself for them by frequent meditation, reflection, and pious conversation, that you may not fall in the time of attack, but rather gloriously triumph, for the glory of God.

4. Consider the blind beggar man sitting by the wayside, who, as Christ passed by, "cried out, saying, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy upon me."[2] Congratulate Christ our Lord on this honour, and the blind man on his happiness in being able to invoke so merciful a Lord. At the same time unite your voice to his in crying out to the Lord Jesus. Tell him of your serious necessities, and those of a world so given to folly in these latter days, and ardently beg of Christ Jesus to spare you in His mercy, to keep you from sin, to deliver you as soon as possible from those you have committed, to make you repent and satisfy duly for them, and atone for the past by amendment and sanctity of life.

[2] St. Luke xvii. 30.

MONDAY.

1. Consider with a tender affection of pity the poverty of the blind beggar man sitting by the wayside, and his need of everything. And as all things are creatures of your Lord, made for your use, kindle in yourself a tender compassion towards them, and call upon God, saying from your heart with more affection than words—"The eyes of all hope in thee, O Lord, Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature;"[3] "Despise not the works of Thy hands;"[4] and similar words.

2. Consider the misfortune of the blind man who as he could not see, could prepare nothing for himself that he required in his blindness. Apply these things to the state of worldly men, and to the soul in mortal sin; and rejoice that you are called into a state of light and splendour, following Christ, the Light of the world. Do your best by prayers, good examples, and other means, to be free yourself from grave sins, and to deliver others from them.

3. Consider the reason why that happy blind man gave Christ no other title than Son of David, when nevertheless others, even the devils, were accustomed to give Him a more noble name, calling Him the Son of God. You may find a cause, either from the meekness of David, or from his compassion towards the afflicted, or from the benevolence so usual with him, as though the blind man wished by the example of David, from whose race Christ

[3] Psalm cxliv. [4] Psalm cxxxvii.

was descended, to move our Lord to show him mercy. Thus our Lord is pleased by a pious stratagem, when with holy artifice we seek to touch His most merciful Heart that He may be good to us.

4. Consider the constancy of the good blind man, who though "they that went before rebuked him that he should hold his peace, cried out much more." This rebuke is given by bad Christians and Religious, when by bad example and idle conversation or works, they draw away those who would more ardently invoke Christ for their own miseries and those of sinners. See that you be not amongst the number, but imitate the blind man, and beg Christ to dispel your darkness, and that of a blind world, and to make you see the Blessed Trinity in Heaven.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the most merciful Heart of our Lord Jesus, Who having heard the pious entreaty of the good blind man, "standing, commanded him to be brought unto Him." Here behold Christ standing; consider what were the thoughts of His mind regarding that blind man; what the affection of His will; and do you desire always so to please your Lord that all your actions may be as cries reaching His ears, and calling forth His beneficent love towards you. See whether they be such, and endeavour with the help of God to make them such.

2. Consider the Humanity of Christ, Who when the blind man was brought to Him, although He knew what was wanted, yet for the sake of kindness, as if He took pleasure in a longer conversation with

him, asked—"What wilt thou that I do to thee?" Showing Himself to be truly ready to grant what was asked. O happy soul, which is so agreeable to its God as to find Him ready to hear its simple petition. Think how great is this happiness; learn from the fervent cry of this blind man how easily it is to be obtained, and strive to be like him.

3. Consider the answer of the blind man to Christ—"Lord, that I may see." He does not ask to be freed from begging, although that also is an evil; but he prefers to put forward the more serious one. Learn wisdom from this untaught blind man, and between two evils avoid the greater. When, therefore, the very smallest offence against God is so great a misfortune, why dare you run the risk of it, for fear of grieving your neighbour by not joining him in sin? Why do you not fear to sin? Why do you fear the opinion of men?

4. Consider the gratitude, both of the blind man, who after being cured by Christ, "followed Him, glorifying God;" and of all the people who, "when they saw it, gave praise to God." Imitate this, especially in these days when God bestows far greater benefits in sparing the wicked and cherishing the good; and praise Him ardently and perseveringly.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

The Supper at Bethany.

1. Consider the demeanour of Christ when He supped in the house of Simon the leper. See with what manner and gesture, with what degree of haste

He eat, drank, and spoke, and how long He sat at table. Gather from everything some instruction whereby to correct your own defects at table, and to imitate Christ at your repasts.

2. Consider the persons who were present at that supper; first, Simon the leper, into whose house Christ disdained not to enter; secondly, that woman who, heedless of human respect, poured the precious ointment over the Head of Christ, and was not ashamed at a public banquet to pay Him that homage, although she knew not His greatness as well as we; thirdly, Judas, murmuring at the waste of this ointment, saying that it ought rather to be sold for the use of the poor, and censuring a good action done in a good spirit. Learn hence not to be ashamed of an open display of virtue, and to interpret all things in good part.

3. Consider the meekness of Christ, Who did not reprove Judas, but only praised the deed of the woman, which she had done for His burial, and which should be kept in everlasting remembrance. Imitate the meekness of Christ.

4. Consider that Judas hence took occasion to betray and sell Christ; for then he went to the Chief Priests to treat with them about His betrayal. Which Christ hindered not, although He knew and could have prevented it, desiring for your sake to undergo a most ignominious death. Examine how often you avoid and prevent the occasions of suffering, and excite yourself to the love of the Cross for the sake of your Lord.

THURSDAY.

On the Treachery of Judas.

1. Consider who Judas was before he sold Christ. Converted by Christ to the true faith, instructed by Him in the mysteries of the faith, a witness of His miracles and of His sanctity, perhaps even a worker of miracles himself, a doctor and preacher of the faith, and yet the perpetrator of such a crime. Consider whether you are to be compared to him in his offices and his gifts, and how much you should fear a serious fall.

2. Consider that Judas fell into this wickedness, not suddenly but gradually, and reflect upon the ways and the depraved affections whereby he fell, that you may avoid the like.

3. Consider how vile a thing were those thirty pieces of silver compared to Christ, the God and Lord of all things, and think how often you prefer worse and viler things to your God and Creator, when you offend Him for the sake of them; whence you shall grieve for your sins and acknowledge yourself worse than Judas.

4. Consider the kindness and patience of Christ, who knowing that Judas valued Him less than thirty pieces of silver yet bore this indignity without repugnance. Hence learn how for the sake of your God you should rejoice when others are esteemed before you, and when mean offices are imposed upon you, since never can those persons or those offices be so vile and abject and unworthy of you as was that money of Judas compared with Christ, the true God and Lord of Heaven and earth.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the baseness of the sale; which you will perceive by the excellence of the Person sold; by the meanness of the price agreed upon; by the persons among whom it was transacted, namely, the most bitter enemies of Christ; by the person of the seller, who was actually a disciple of Christ, bound to Him by so many benefits, which made it a thing most repugnant to true friendship, wherein all treachery and deceit are execrable. Learn hence how much to be shunned is all ingratitude towards benefactors, especially intimate friends, and all deceit and insincere conversation; reflect whether you are guilty of such, and purpose amendment.

2. Consider the origin of this impious sale; namely, the love of superfluous comforts in food and clothing, and in the possession of things that we use. Judas in the school of Christ, was in want of no necessaries, for as Christ once said to His disciples—"When I sent you, did you want anything?"[5] But Judas, not content with poor and moderate food, sufficient, nevertheless, for a respectable state of life, became wicked in seeking for money to obtain superfluities. Examine whether you seek unnecessary comforts in food, clothing, bed, books, &c., and take heed lest you come gradually in this way to worse evils.

3. Consider that Judas profited not by his ill-gotten money, for he never used it, but took it back to those from whom he received it. Oh, how often

[5] St. Luke xxii. 35.

things ill-acquired are utterly destroyed! How often what has been obtained against obedience, has at last to be displayed, restored and lost! Examine, therefore, your own doings, and imitate Judas at least in restoring what you have wrongly acquired; purposing amendment for the future.

4. Consider the terrible death of Judas, proceeding from despair. Acknowledge the goodness of God, Who has not allowed you to come to such an end, though your sins are more grievous; take heed lest you die a bad death; and hence shun all things which lead thereto.

SATURDAY.

On the Vocation of Judas to the Apostolate.

1. Consider the goodness of God, Who, knowing from all eternity the dreadful death of Judas, yet called him to the most noble and perfect state and dignity in the Church of God. Admire this mercy of God, strive always to imitate it, in doing good even to those whom you know for certain to be desirous of your ruin; and much more to those who are not hostile to you, even though they be a trouble to you, and give you occasions of patience and humiliation.

2. Consider the wisdom of God in the vocation of Judas, Who, to vindicate the Hierarchy of His Church, and Religious Orders, from the evil tongues of men, would Himself call to the apostolate a man unworthy of the office, in order that ecclesiastical Superiors, who know not the hearts of men, as Christ knew the heart of Judas and his end, may not be

blamed, when sometimes they promote unfit persons to ecclesiastical functions; and that their rule may not be despised on account of unfit ministers, since none worse than Judas, can be chosen.

3. Consider that in that small College of Apostles, there was yet one bad Apostle; and wonder not if even in the ecclesiastical order, or in Religion, imperfect men may sometimes be found: for they are not as bad as Judas, nor are there very many, not one in ten. Therefore, never despise any Order, whether of Clerics or Religious, on account of its many imperfect members; for the Apostolic College was not to be despised on account of the wickedness of Judas, which was greater than the imperfection of any one soever.

4. Consider the love of God towards the Church, and those Religious Orders which He purges by casting out the wicked from among them, as He cast out Judas from the Apostles. And take heed lest such a fate befall you; therefore, strive after those things which are likely in Religion to gain God's gift of perseverance; such as are the shunning of grave sins, perfect obedience, love of the Cross, and contempt of self; and, on the other hand, fly from those things which drive thee from Religion; such as a lax conscience, love of ease, self-esteem, stiffness in your own judgment, disobedience, and the like.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

1. Consider the obedience of Christ, Who, although not subject to the Mosaic law, which He came to abolish, would yet, in accordance with it, eat the

Paschal lamb with His disciples. Whence learn how much you are bound to observe the laws of God, of the Church, of your Order, and the interior lights of your conscience, which are so much more useful and perfect than the Mosaic rites abolished by Christ.

2. Consider the exactness of Christ in observing this rite; how He omitted not the smallest point, but observed the minutest precepts thereof. Compare with His your own diligence in observing the laws of God, the Church, and your Order; see whether you be as exact, or in what, and how far, you are wanting. Having aroused your will, purpose amendment, at least in the most important particulars, and endeavour to conform yourself to the diligence of Christ.

3. Consider the interior thoughts of Christ, and the affections of His will, while eating the Paschal lamb; with regard to the lamb itself, or to His companions at the repast, or to the large furnished supper-room, or to other things and persons; examine your own interior dispositions compared to His; see whether you resemble Him at your repasts, and purpose seriously to amend.

4. Consider the modesty, devotion, and temperance, of the Apostles at that supper; the gravity of their looks, words, and every movement and gesture, the holiness inspired by their whole demeanour. Compare with theirs your own actions on similar occasions; correct what needs correction, add what is needful, cut off what is superfluous.

MONDAY.

1. Consider how Christ prepared for washing His disciples' feet—how He rose from supper, laid aside His garments, took a towel, girded Himself, and poured water into a basin; and draw from each action the necessary instructions and examples for making your own actions like those of Christ.

2. Consider the external mode in which Christ washed His disciples' feet; namely, with what careful diligence, and with what alacrity. See whether you perform in a similar manner the things commanded you by God, the Church, Religion, and your conscience, and purpose amendment.

3. Consider the interior affection with which Christ washed the feet of His disciples; namely, with what love, fervour, interior reverence; with what self-abasement, what desire of yet greater humiliation; with what patience, chastity, and purity of soul. And attend very particularly to this, how, without respect or distinction of persons, He washed the feet of the one, just as of the other; and gather instructions from it all.

4. Consider the humility of Christ in washing His disciples' feet, especially those of Judas, about to betray Him; think over the meanness of the action in itself; the greatness of Christ's Person, inasmuch as He was God and Man; the unworthiness of the Apostles compared to Christ, God and Man; the wickedness of Judas, who was already plotting to betray Christ. On the other hand, be persuaded that you can never have any meaner or viler occupa-

tion than was this washing of feet with respect to Christ; and hence make a firm and heroic resolution never to shirk any lowly service from pride, vainglory, or self-love; nay, rather to seek first and most ardently those things which may humble thee before men, and to persevere therein, for the love of Christ, humbling Himself for thy sake.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the reverence and humility of Peter, under the influence of which he shrank from the washing of his feet—"Lord, dost thou wash my feet?"[1] Consider how justly he might shrink, when he thought of Christ's greatness and his own vileness. Learn hence with what reason you should accept or not accept those honours or services rendered you by such as are your superiors in any way, whether in age, virtue, doctrine, talent, or dignity. Examine how you behave on such occasions, with respect to your place or occupation, with regard to your mode of sitting, or when remaining in your own apartment, and the like; amend what needs correction.

2. Consider the excessive humility of Peter, which although not faulty, was yet imperfect, when he said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Whom Christ corrected, saying—"If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." Learn hence that in our actions and virtuous purposes we are to avoid making as it were obstinate, and as it were eternal resolutions, but in all things observe moderation, and adhere to no good action so firmly as not to be willing promptly

[1] St. John xiii. 6.

to relinquish it, if your Superiors, the interpreters of the divine will, judge it better for you to relinquish it. Examine your conduct in this respect, and aim at perfect moderation and evenness of mind.

3. Consider the promptness of St. Peter in changing his purpose when he heard these words, "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part in Me." Learn hence, in changing your obstinate determination, and in doing what God orders through His vicars, not to look for such powerful and terrible motives as these words of Christ, "Thou shalt have no part with Me," but at the slightest sign and expression of a desire in your Superiors, lend your will to all things which they propose to you, considering how very perfect, noble, heroic, and pleasing to God this will be.

4. Consider those most sweet words of Christ, so full of unction and of doctrine, which you shall gather from them like the bee—"Know you what I have done to you? I have given you an example, that as I have done to you so you do also. Amen, amen, I say to you, the servant is not greater than his Lord." Just as though He said, Seek not therefore greater comfort than I seek, in food, &c. Christ proceeds—"If you know these things, you shall be blessed if you do them. I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen." Oh, that you may be among the Elect! See whether you have the signs of the Elect.

WEDNESDAY.

The Treachery of Judas foretold by Christ.

1. Consider with what interior sentiments Christ foretold His betrayal by Judas. "He was troubled in spirit,"[2] and justly, for the execrable crime of Judas; as it deserved righteous anger, so it gave sufficient cause for trouble in the mind of Him Who reproved it. Nor did that trouble, as in us, go before reason, but it followed the dictates of mind and reason. Examine yourself whether your disturbances of mind have these two conditions, whether they spring from a just cause, and whether they follow or go before reason, and strive to conform yourself to Christ.

2. Consider the grief of Christ arising from the ingratitude of the Jews—"Whilst they were eating, He said, Amen, I say to you, that one of you is about to betray Me."[3] Remember that you have received more and greater benefits from Christ than to feed with Him upon that food; and yet how often you have betrayed Christ, violating His precepts, and perhaps His counsels. Examine how you should act in future, and how you should make satisfaction to so great a Benefactor for having offended Him.

3. Consider the meekness of Christ, Who did not openly reveal or name His betrayer to His disciples. See whether you behave in a similar manner regarding the faults of others, and if you have failed amend, considering the motives which may excite you to detest that vice of detraction and defamation of your neighbour.

[2] St. John xiii. 21. [3] St. Matt. xxvi. 21.

4. Consider the goodness of Christ, Who, moved by the sole desire of serving Judas, and at his express request, revealed him to them as the one about to betray Him, that so at least he might be withdrawn by shame from his impious purpose. The more easily to urge him, He said—"Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed; it were better for him if that man had not been born." [4] Nevertheless, this checked him not. Hence recognize how dangerous and pernicious it is to loose the reins of inordinate feelings, whether of anger, or of love towards anything or person, and how difficult it is, even by the express voice of God Himself, to be withdrawn from an evil purpose which has sprung from a violent passion. On the other hand look into the immoderate affections peculiar to thee, and into the perils and evils into which thou hast fallen through them, not once only. Examine into the means whereby you may control and mortify them, lest they become violent in thee, and lead thee to sin or imperfection.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the frailty of human nature, even in good men; how the Apostles, even after the reception of the Eucharist, began to dispute among themselves "which of them should be greater." [5] Whence you will perceive how difficult it is to root out self-esteem and desire of honour. Examine therefore your own conscience, see whether there be any such defect in you and by what signs it displays itself, and purpose amendment.

[4] St. Matt. xxvi. 24. [5] St. Luke xvii. 24.

2. Consider the admonition of Christ, how paternally, how gently He recalls them from the ambitious desire of honour, showing them how that desire flourished among the Gentile Kings, and consequently how unsuited it was to the professors of the law of Christ. Hereupon He admonishes, "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the youngest; and he that is the leader as he that serveth." Weigh well each word, and learn that if the greater and the leader ought to be as the younger and the servant, how much more should it be so among equals, how much more with him who is really the least in age, dignity, virtue, or talent. See what is your own behaviour, and having observed your most prominent defects, resolve to amend.

3. Consider another motive whereby Christ urges the shunning of honours, namely, His own example —"Behold I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Call to mind how Christ from His Birth did the part of one who serves, in His clothing, His food, His dwelling, His occupations, His associates, &c., that you may learn how agreeable to God, how suitable to yourself, how necessary for your peace and perfection it is to conform yourself in this respect to Christ, and not to the world, to courtiers, or to imperfect Religious.

4. Consider the reward which Christ promises to those who follow Him in the state of humility. "I dispose to you a kingdom."[6] How Lord? "As My Father has disposed to Me." Ponder these words, "As My Father has disposed to Me." What follows? "That you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit upon thrones, judging the

[6] St. Luke xvii. 24.

twelve tribes of Israel." Reflect upon each part of this reward, and think who those are to whom He makes this promise. "You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations."[7] That is, living in the same state as I myself. Here thank God, Who has called you to this state, especially if you are living in it as you ought; if not, amend your life.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider Christ's care of His own, how He forewarns them, that the foreseen arrows may not wound, that they may arm themselves and watch—"Behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."[8] Ponder upon every word, namely, the power of Satan, his experience in fighting, his cunning, the means by which he conquers, his ardent desire and indefatigable labour in assaulting the good, and then what he aims at, "to sift us like wheat," that is to say, to separate us from the good, like the chaff which is burnt after its separation from the wheat. This Satan accomplishes in two ways—(1) in separating us by our actions from the good, that is to say, from the manner of life of the good, making us different from them, leading us into bad customs and imperfections; (2) drawing us at last away from our vocation, and thus carrying us into hell. How diligent, therefore, and vigilant ought they to be, for whom so powerful and skilful an enemy is continually lying in wait. To escape these snares, the best means is to obey the counsels given by Christ through His

[7] St. Luke xvii. 28. [8] St. Luke xx. 31.

ministers, which forearm and guard us that we may not be overcome.

2. Consider the goodwill of Peter—"Lord, I am willing to follow Thee to prison and to death."[9] "Though all should be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized. Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee."[10] And yet, before he was in danger of death, he instantly denied Christ! Hence learn to fear yourself, to distrust yourself, and to expect more from the virtue and perseverance of others than from your own.

3. Consider the truth of Christ's prediction, for Peter denied Him as He had foretold. Learn hence this most essential doctrine, namely, that all the predictions of God and His warnings in the Scripture are to be believed, such as, "He who loves the danger shall perish in it."[11] "No one looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God."[12] "He who gathereth not with Me, scattereth."[13] "He who hateth not his father and mother," &c., that is, he who does not fly from them when they draw him from good to evil, "and who taketh not up his cross," bearing trials willingly, or at least patiently, and "cometh not after Me," imitating My life in all things, "cannot be my disciple."[14] "The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence,"[15] and similar words. Believe them, then, and walk as these admonitions of God command.

4. Consider with fear and humility, without curiosity, what Christ, sitting at the right hand of His Father, thinks regarding thy perseverance in a good life and in Religion, and what in a certain way He

[9] St. Luke xx. 31. [10] St. Matt. xxvi. 33, 35.
[11] Ecclus. iii. 27. [12] St. Luke ix. 62. [13] St. Luke xi. 23.
[14] St. Luke xiv. 26, 27. [15] St. Matt. xi. 12.

predicts of thee to the Angels and Saints. Knowing that He will not leave you unless you first leave Him, fly from what might cut you off from this state, and practise the opposite virtues.

SATURDAY.

1. Consider how Christ, after the Last Supper, went with His disciples to a distant garden. Look at Him as He proceeds with them; observe every movement of His Body, each gesture, each glance of the eye, during this journey to the Garden. Then turning your eyes on yourself and your own similar actions, draw the necessary instructions for your amendment.

2. Consider the companions of Christ's journey; whether He has any choice, and what choice, among them; whether He takes one nearer to Him than another, and why. Then, reflecting on your own companions, learn how very seriously to be avoided are respect of persons, private friendships, choice of society for worldly and not for spiritual ends, with other faults springing from the same source, and endeavour in this respect to conform yourself to Christ.

3. Consider the end for which Christ went to the Garden; not the end at which men of the world and careless and imperfect Religious aim, but far different. Consider at the same time the interior affection wherewith Christ went thither, namely, without excessive eagerness, with a quiet mind, a calm will, yet with a great desire of suffering there all that He knew was impending. Whence you

may learn to amend in two ways—first, in repressing too great a desire even for such things as are good, and all our eagerness of mind in their pursuit; second, in mortifying the repugnance towards those places where you foresee that suffering awaits you.

4. Consider of what things Christ spoke, if He spoke at all, in that journey with His disciples; with what voice, with what gestures; and drawing instruction from all, conform yourself in every respect to Christ our Lord.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

The Prayer of Christ in the Garden.

1. Consider why Christ chose for His prayer that Garden remote from the town, and why He went to a distance even from the Apostles; not, indeed, that He might pretend to pray, or that He might pray negligently, or do anything else in that time, but quite the contrary. See what is your own conduct in this respect, and seriously purpose a great and effectual amendment.

2. Consider why Christ, having left His other Apostles, selected three with whom He went aside to pray, namely, Peter, James, and John, for in them shone forth many excellent virtues. Learn hence why it is sometimes lawful to hold special converse with those whose virtue is very great, provided only that no human motive be mixed up under the pretext of virtue. Hence ardently desire such a state for your soul as may make you more pleasing to Christ than others, and may render you worthy of His greater favours. Seek this, moreover,

not by an instinct of vainglory, but that you may give the more pleasure and consolation to the Heart of Christ.

3. Consider the position of Christ in His prayer. "He fell upon His Face."[1] If Christ, Who, as God, was equal and most dear to the Father, and, as Man, most familiar with Him, conscious of no evil, weak and of a most tender frame, prays thus, what should you do? Compare the attitude of your body in prayer; bewail your irreverence, sensuality, and ease, which you would not display in speaking to a King, or to your Superior, and purpose a serious amendment.

4. Consider the words of Christ in prayer. "Not My will, but Thine be done."[2] "If this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done."[3] Here are to be gathered from prayer two special fruits—an ardent desire of doing the Divine will in all things, and of bearing all severe trials whatsoever for God's sake. Examine whether you seek and attain to this by your prayers, and endeavour seriously to attain it for the future.

MONDAY.

On the Anguish of the Soul of Christ in the Garden.

1. Consider how Christ our Lord endured great sadness during that prayer in the Garden. "He began to grow sorrowful, and be sad."[4] The cause of that sadness was the bitter death which He was willingly to endure, as also our sins, which were the

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 39.
[2] St. Luke xxii. 42.
[3] St. Matt. xxvi. 42.
[4] St. Matt. xxvi. 37.

cause of that death. This sadness, however, was, of His own accord, invited by Christ, that there might be nothing which He would not endure for our sake. See whether, when you are sad, it be from a just cause, or whether, on the contrary, you are not made sad by those things which should make you glad.

2. Consider that Christ suffered fear as well as sadness on account of so bitter a death, but not that fear which springs up in us against our will. It was a voluntary fear, because He could easily have averted the evils which He feared. Thus Christ for your sake forgoes no sorrow which may torment Him on account of your sins, that you also may show a like generosity towards Him in a good life and patient suffering.

3. Consider that Christ, besides sadness and fear, suffered voluntary weariness, springing from the fear of the evils impending over Him; that His most holy Soul might be all the more tormented, to satisfy God for your wicked enjoyments and pleasures in this world. Learn hence not to seek alleviation in the afflictions of thy soul, but rather, in order to conform yourself to Christ suffering so bitterly, seek those things which may perpetually bring suffering to your soul, that so you may resemble your Head.

4. Consider that, besides these three stings, Christ came to the Agony itself, which arose from the greatness of His sadness, fear, and weariness, of His own accord, as you know, and willingly. Hence, having recognized the very great love of Christ towards you—for your sake He recoiled from no torment—see how little your heart responds to Him, how luxurious you are, unwilling to bear any hard-

ship, but seeking that all should succeed according to your own wishes. Blush, O luxurious member! O sensual warrior! And henceforth conform yourself to Christ.

TUESDAY.

On the Words of Christ to His Disciples in the Garden.

1. Consider the first words of Christ to His disciples—"Stay you here and watch with Me."[5] Foreseeing the danger which was impending in the time of His Passion, He urges them to watch, because then it was of the highest necessity to be prepared for conflict with the enemy, who always, "as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."[6] Thus it is always needful to watch. See whether you watch. Watching is often a sign that the arrival of the enemy is thought of, that his unexpected appearance is feared, that on the slightest occasion or show of an attack, weapons will be snatched up, and that every weak place where he might gain admittance is guarded and closed. See whether you do this, and take heed to your affairs, lest, unprepared, you be overcome.

2. Consider the admonition of Christ to His disciples, whom He found sleeping—"Could you not watch one hour with Me?"[7] How sweet, how free from bitterness! And yet He was their Creator, Lord, Master, Superior. Why, then, are you irritated and bitter with your equals, and sometimes with your superiors? Think whether

[5] St. Matt. xxvi. 38. [6] 1 St. Peter v. 8.
[7] St. Matt. xxvi. 40.

this be fitting in you, who offend God and man in many things, and yet would have your own faults tolerated.

3. Consider the means given by Christ to His disciples for avoiding the evils which are wont to rise from temptations. "Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."[8] There are two means by which we may escape all the temptations of the devil so that they may not hurt us; vigilance, or a care of our perfection, and fervent prayer. Examine how you use these two means, and see that you fail not in your duty.

4. Consider the promptitude of Christ in offering Himself to death for us. On the approach of His enemies He said to His disciples, "Behold; he is at hand who will betray Me."[9] "The hour is come; behold the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners: Rise up, let us go."[10] Consider in what calm words Christ speaks to His disciples of His bitter Passion. "He shall betray Me into the hands of sinners." Do you speak in like manner of the smaller insults of your enemies? Then how quickly He goes to meet them. "Rise up, let us go." And you, indeed, how quickly you flee from the smallest trials, labours, troubles, and shame, in the service of God. Blush, and amend in earnest.

[8] St. Matt. xxvi. 41. [9] St. Matt. xxvi. 42.
[10] St. Mark xiv. 41, 42.

WEDNESDAY.

On the Sweat of Christ in the Garden.

1. Consider how great was the fervour of Christ in His prayer, when it forced sweat from Him even in that season. If Christ, Who held everything in His hands, Who had no need of prayer, Who was guilty of no crime, Who had others and not Himself to care for, yet prayed so fervently, how much does it behove you to pray earnestly! Do you pray thus, or in a contrary manner? And yet what are you compared to Christ as God, Whom you have so many times gravely offended, and perhaps are now offending?

2. Consider the nature of this sweat—"His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground,"[11] or as it is in the Greek, "great drops." It is a wonderful thing for Christ to shed blood, and so copiously that it runs down to the ground. Sweat indicates both weakness, and the labour from whence it springs. Hence are manifest the tender nature of Christ's Flesh, which could sweat in so unusual a way, and the unheard of toil which He undertook for your sake. Do you sweat in the performance of those things which you have undertaken for the good of your soul? With what exertion and diligence do you accomplish your prayers, studies, penances, and other business? Do these actions cause you to sweat? Be ashamed, luxurious soldier and servant; seeing your Leader sweating under the toil undertaken for your sake in

[11] St. Luke xxii. 44.

so tender a body? watch at least sometimes, and labour fervently for yourself and for your soul.

3. Consider the rigour with which Christ treated His Body; for we do not read that He dried that sweat. And you, how luxurious you are in bearing smaller things, and in seeking alleviation and sometimes delights, under the plea of health and necessity; examine therefore into thy sensuality, and amend.

4. Consider the liberality of Christ towards you, Who being about to offer up once to God the Father His Blood upon the Cross for your sins, as if impatient of delay, anticipates the hour of death, shedding it in the Garden, that He may teach you to be quick in rendering to God those services which you ought to render, whether of the Decalogue, or of the Church, or of thy rules, or such as are required by the laws and instinct of your own conscience, especially such as conduce to your mortification, which vicious nature abhors. See whether it be so, and amend.

THURSDAY.

On Christ Comforted by the Angels.

1. Consider the bitterness of Christ's sufferings, which He willed to show us, in receiving consolation from an Angel, as though He were not in Himself sufficient to alleviate sufferings voluntarily endured. And you, indeed, strive to avoid the slightest trouble in anything; and although you have never suffered anything worthy of the consolation of an Angel, how

impatiently have you behaved, and still behave, on the slightest similar occasion of suffering! Be ashamed, and correct yourself.

2. Consider the humility of Christ, Who would be comforted by His own creature. Compare the knowledge, power, and other qualities of the Angel, with the knowledge, power and perfection of Christ. How far removed from Christ was he in everything; yet Christ disdained not to be comforted by a being in every way inferior to Himself! And you, how often do you refuse the counsels of those better than yourself, the admonitions, consolations, directions of those more perfect. See how you should behave for the future.

3. Consider with what reverence the Angel comforted Christ, and how he conversed with Him, how he assisted Him; and comparing this with your own manner of treating with Christ in prayer and in Communion, amend, if you find ought requiring amendment.

4. Consider the Angel's consolation in itself; with what matter he comforted Christ—namely, with the will of God the Father, Who destined Him to that death; with the pre-determined oblation of Christ Himself; with the fruit to be derived from these sufferings, and the like. And see how all those things which comforted Christ, serve to render sweet to you also all the burdens, however severe, of the Religious life. Bear them therefore, in future, more willingly; seek them, moreover, more ingeniously, and never think of putting them aside, but rather of increasing and adding to them, for the love of your God, Who bore so many and such bitter things for your sake.

FRIDAY.

On the Blood Shed by Christ in the Garden.

1. Consider the generous love of Christ towards you, Who, anticipating the time, place, and causes of the death chosen by Himself to be accomplished by men in the shedding of His Blood, poured out yet more of it for you. See whether you be as swift in rendering to God the things which you owe, as a Christian and a Religious of your Order, not voluntary works, called of supererogation, but such as are commanded and prescribed. Having recognized your tardiness and negligence in performing them, arouse your heart to a serious amendment.

2. Consider the bitterness of the grief of Christ, arising from the foreknowledge of His death and of your sins. For if tears be a sign of grief, how much more so is blood, shed in so extraordinary a manner, and so copiously! Examine well in the sight of God, whether it becomes you, stained as you are with so many sins, to pour yourself out in merriment, so often frivolous and vicious, and not to have that sense of your sins of which Christ here makes so wonderful a manifestation.

3. Consider Christ's relish for prayer, which He felt so much, that although sweating Blood, He desisted not from it, but prayed at yet greater length. And you, do you not grow weary in your prayer on account of a slight ailment, which makes you either omit it, or perform it coldly, and without fitting reverence of mind or of body? Be ashamed, blame yourself, and purpose amendment.

4. Consider the abundant satisfaction made by Christ for your sins, Who, although one drop of Blood at His death would have sufficed for your redemption, yet shed it so copiously for your sake in the Garden. Burn then with love towards your most loving Redeemer; be ashamed that you are so stingy towards Him in doing those things which belong to your salvation, and to the acquirement of the fruits of this copious redemption; and make amends for past meanness.

SATURDAY.

On the Blood of Christ Offered to the Eternal Father.

1. Consider with what wondrous affection and love the Eternal Father contemplates the Blood of Christ, shed both in prayer and in death; the Blood, indeed, of His beloved Son, poured out so abundantly, and from such an ardent desire for His glory. On the one hand, rejoice that the Heavenly Father prizes this Blood so highly, and congratulate Christ thereon; on the other hand conceive an ardent desire of pleasing God as perfectly as possible; so that He may accept the things which you offer Him with a tender relish, as coming from a most dear son. Examine what are the things in you which hinder this sweet love from God towards you, and try to remove them.

2. Consider what good this Blood obtains for us from the Father; namely, deliverance from our sins and the bestowal of God's gifts. Kindle in yourself a lively confidence of receiving these two effects; but inasmuch as your cooperation is necessary for their

reception, examine what, and of what kind, that cooperation should be, and in what it consists; that this treasure, laid up by Christ, for you in the bosom of His Father, may not be without use or profit, but rather of the highest benefit to you.

3. Consider for what causes this Blood was so acceptable to the Eternal Father, and so efficacious with Him on our behalf. These causes may be found partly in the Person Who shed it, partly in the abundance which He shed, partly in the end for which He shed it, partly in the time wherein He shed it, partly in them for whom He shed it, partly in Him to Whom He offered it in such an effusion. And you, from each of these considerations, gather some useful admonitions, which may cause you to burn with love towards Christ, to correct your evil actions, and to perform good ones for the love of so great a benefactor, and for His greater glory.

4. Consider the prize which the Eternal Father judged fitting for the Humanity of Christ on account of such a blood-shedding; and burn with the desire of living in such holiness as to be worthy of the highest heavenly reward. See how coldly you are seeking this, how little you deserve it, and amend.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

On the same Blood, as it Bathed the Body of Christ and the Ground.

1. Consider in how suitable and worthy a manner the Limbs of Christ received and retained on them that effusion of Blood, those Limbs so pure and holy;

then contemplate that same Blood, now glorious, given to you with the glorious Body of Christ in the Eucharist, to repose in your heart. Blush; humble yourself deeply; and acknowledging yourself so unworthy of It, seek effectual means to be rendered as fitting a receptacle as possible for this so holy, so sanctifying Blood of our Lord and Creator, Jesus Christ.

2. Consider that this Blood was not wiped away by Christ, but partly adhered to His Flesh, and partly to His garments. And think how precious a relic was that garment, imbued with such precious Blood, more nobly adorned indeed than if it had been covered with jewels and carbuncles. Oh, that it were possible to have one shred of that robe, reddened with such Blood! Then remember that you may yourself be a yet more precious relic, you who in Communion receive, truly and really, the whole of this Blood. Acknowledge the divine condescension and your own felicity; examine what you owe to your God for this boon, and give it to Him.

3. Consider this Blood trickling to the ground from the Body of Christ, and how that ground enriched with so precious a treasure, was held in no repute by the Jews, but looked on as common earth. Learn hence how many persons, things, occupations, and duties are precious in the eyes of God, and esteemed great by Him, which nevertheless to men of the world are either unknown or of small account; and examine into yourself whether perhaps you are not like to them, making little account of what is great before God, and despising what He most esteems. Correct what is amiss.

4. Consider how this Blood, although so salutary,

profited nothing to the ground whereon It fell from the Body of Christ. Examine whether and wherein that same Blood profits you, which so often, and so abundantly, Christ pours into you in the Eucharist; and take heed lest you be like that earth.

MONDAY.

On the same Blood, as regards Its Efficacy for Us.

1. Consider first, that this Blood of Christ is a Sacrifice offered by Christ to the most Holy Trinity, the supreme excellence of which Sacrifice you will recognize by comparing it with the ancient sacrifices, which it far surpasses; those, namely, of Abel, of Isaac voluntarily offered by Abraham, of Noe after the Deluge, of Melchisedech, of the Priests of Aaron, and of others in the Mosaic Law; and also by the considering of the Person offering, of the love with which it is offered, and the innumerable and most grievous evils for which it is offered. See hence your happiness, for whom this Sacrifice has been prepared in the Church of God for so many centuries; excite yourself to a great hope of the manifold mercies of God to be derived from it, and firmly resolve so to prepare your heart and body as to receive the fruits of so great a Sacrifice.

2. Consider, secondly, that this Blood is your food and drink. You will know the magnitude of this benefit by a comparison of this food with the various natural and supernatural foods given by God from the beginning of the world to these times, and again from the abundance of this divine Blood, wherewith

Christ feeds us more plentifully than a mother feeds her infants with milk. Hence understand how spiritually healthy, how vigorous, how robust, how indefatigable, how deified you ought to be, nourished so often with this divine food; examine whether you be such, and why you are not such, and amend.

3. Consider, thirdly, that this Blood is the price wherewith you are redeemed by God. Burn therefore with love towards your Redeemer, Who has bought you at so great a price, and acknowledge that you may not be your own. "You are not your own," says the Apostle, "for you are bought with a great price."[1] Examine therefore whether you live as becomes one bought by God, and as it were the property of God, or as they who are their own masters and free; and bring yourself back to the state to which you belong on account of such a redemption.

4. Consider, fourthly, that this Blood is your model, by the contemplation of which you should be moved to the patient, willing, and joyful endurance of all trials, especially of those which befall you when you are innocent and blameless, for none of them, even the most grievous, can equal the effusion of the Blood of Christ. Acknowledge, therefore, that you can suffer little or nothing; correct your impatience and pride, which are wont to spring up on occasions of suffering, and in future be willing even to shed your blood for Christ.

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 20.

TUESDAY.

On the Approach of Judas to Christ.

1. Consider the pernicious growth of evil affections in the mind. For at first Judas only plotted the betrayal of Christ in his mind; then he went to the Jews to treat of the matter; and finally he was not ashamed to go and attack Christ with a train of followers. Examine to what degree your passions have arrived; whether they reach so far that you are not ashamed to show their impetuosity with your equals or your superiors; and take heed lest, unrepressed, they cause you to fall into the last stage of evil.

2. Consider the miserable condition of this life, for no place, no society can be safe from misfortunes and sins, if, indeed, the very place where Christ was praying, where His dear and holy Apostles were present, was not free from the intrusion of Judas and his wicked followers; and learn not to think lightly of your state, if you see trials raised up against it by the malignant, or if you find in it men tarnished by imperfections; for you will never find in it men like to the impious Judas. Take occasion rather from hence to live so piously that you may not be of their number, whose way of living brings into contempt and discredit a state of life so excellent and holy.

3. Consider the blindness of a man who is agitated by a violent passion. For Judas knew that Christ was infinitely powerful; yet he went to meet Him with weapons, torches, and lanterns, as though to

prevent Him escaping or freeing Himself. Oh, how often you are also blinded by your evil affections, when you will not see evil to be evil, nor good to be good! Take heed lest this blindness increase with the growing strength of your passions, and so you come at length to the extremity of evil.

4. Consider the danger of bad society. Judas would not by himself have injured Christ, although he was now hostile to Him; but the troop approaching, he gained courage and boldness. And you, therefore, take heed not to seek promoters and supporters of your imperfections, lest, insensibly, you fall into perdition. Fight, then, the first beginnings in time, and cut off the bad habit, lest you perish.

WEDNESDAY.

On the Circumstances of Judas' Approach to Christ.

1. Consider that Christ was betrayed in the very place whither He often retired for the sake of prayer. Thus the devil is wont there to attack us, there to conquer us, where we ought to be the more helped through the presence and proximity of the good, and where we ought to be the more holy through the sanctity of the place and occupation. See whether you find it not thus with you; whether you perceive not your sins to be most frequently committed where you should be most devout, and where you have many good persons in your company. Examine therefore what you should do for the future, lest you misuse such places, occupations, and persons.

2. Consider the time chosen by Judas for betray-

ing Christ. He attacked Him indeed at night, after supper, when He was far from the company of men. So do Satan and wicked men choose similar times to perpetrate their iniquity. Examine if it be so with you, and arm yourself, lest in similar moments you may be led into offences against God, or to imperfections, either by the devil or by imperfect men.

3. Consider the words uttered by Judas before Christ was apprehended. "Hail, Rabbi,"[2] said he. Sweet, friendly words, breathing reverence: honied poison! Oh, how often do you so treat both God and men! For you say to God, "Thou art my Lord, thou art my Love," and yet your heart is turned away from Him; it offends Him; and your actions are directly opposed to your speech and to your promises to Him. How often, indeed, do you address men, and your brethren, in sweet words, when you are backbiting them and cherishing rancour and rash judgments in your hearts. Blush, O insincere man! Detest this deceit, so hateful to God and men, so mischievous to a community; and purpose amendment.

4. Consider how Judas pointed out Christ by a kiss, that so the Jews might take Him; when Christ said, "Dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"[3] Thus did that impious wretch abuse what was good. Think how disgraceful it is to abuse a thing instituted for a good end. Take heed lest you pervert similar things; reading by curiosity, dispute by vainglory, conversation by various sins of the tongue. Observe your principal defects in this matter, and try to avoid them in future.

[2] St. Matt. xxvi 49. [3] St. Luke xxii. 48.

THURSDAY.

On the Words of Christ before His Apprehension.

1. Consider the words of Christ to His Apostles—"Rise, let us go: behold he is at hand that will betray Me."[4] Wherein remark three things: (1) The promptitude of Christ, offering Himself voluntarily, not shunning the attack of His enemies. Is it so with you? How often do you avoid, not enemies like these, but the slightest labours and mortifications? Therefore do you also in future seek them voluntarily. (2) Remark the humility of Christ, for He goes not alone to meet His enemies, although He could alone have destroyed them, but He calls His own to Him. Learn then to seek the help of others, and although you are able to do certain things alone, yet for humility's sake undertake them with others, as though by yourself you could not perform them. (3) Remark the modesty of Christ, Who, in speaking of Judas, calls him not impious or infamous, although He might justly have done so, but, without any such epithet, declares plainly and with the most gentle words for what purpose he comes. Compare herein your own actions with those of Christ, and amend.

2. Consider the words of Christ to Judas—"Friend, whereto art thou come?" Wherein ponder on three things: (1) Notice the gentleness of Christ, Who calls His worst foe friend, and that not indeed feignedly, as is your custom, but sincerely and from His Heart. (2) Learn that all those are

[4] St. Matt. xxvi. 46.

truly to be called friends, who give us cause and opportunity of suffering something for Christ. (3) Think that now may these words be said deservedly to thee by Christ: "Whereto art thou come?" That is to say, you are not come into Religion for comforts, honours, idleness, exalted offices, for the use of things precious and agreeable, but for things directly opposite. Yet you follow not after these. Blush, and amend.

3. Consider Christ's words to the band of soldiers —"Whom seek ye? . . . I am He; if you seek Me, let these go their way."[5] Wherein are to be studied, first the meekness of Christ, thus gently accosting His enemies; then thy own bitterness and detestable harshness of speech; and, again, the majesty of Christ, for "as soon as He had said to them I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground." Hence you should entertain the greatest hope of His help and protection in your necessities and trials, Who indeed forbids that His own be even touched. Doubt not then, if you are good, of being in the Heart of your Lord, nor even in your silence of having Him for your Heavenly Defender.

4. Consider Christ's words to Peter—"Put up again thy sword into its place."[6] Thus He forbids self-defence. Learn hence a very necessary doctrine, namely, for the sake of peace and edification, your injuries and those of Religion are not to be avenged by ill-will, nor by sharp words, nor by threats or other things that wound, but by meekness. For "in patience we shall possess our souls."[7]

[5] St. John xviii. [6] St. Matt. xxvi. 52.
[7] St. Luke xxi. 19.

FRIDAY.

On the Healing of the Servant's Ear.

1. Consider the goodness of Christ, Who forbids striking with the sword, and gives a reason for the prohibition—"All that take the sword shall perish by the sword."[8] The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"[9] That you may indeed learn to withdraw evil doers from their evil; not helping them by advice and assistance, as you perhaps do; and then to add reasons by which you may effectually prevent the evil. See what is your own conduct, and strive that it be such.

2. Consider the clemency of Christ, Who did good to His enemy in healing his ear. For it was not enough that He injured not Malchus, He would actually do him a service, as He had previously taught: "Do good to them that hate you."[10] Examine whether you behave so to those who hate you.

3. Consider the benevolence of Christ, Who would not suffer a deformity to remain in the body wounded by Peter, but restored the ear, without which nevertheless all the functions of the body could have been carried on. If then a natural and involuntary deformity in Malchus was displeasing to God, how much do your sins and voluntary impurities displease Him! See whether you are free from all these.

4. Consider the power of Christ, Who healed the

[8] St. Matt. xxvi. 52. [9] St. John xviii. 11.
[10] St. Matt. v. 44.

wounded man by His touch alone; and rejoice that you serve so powerful a Lord, yea, that you have so powerful a Physician, and so efficacious and certain a medicine, which is even made your food and drink, and is so frequently offered to you. What, therefore, is the reason that receiving so often this medicine, applied so intimately to you, you are not cured of your infirmities, but perchance become day by day more weak and ailing? Inquire into the reasons. Remove the obstacles; lest, perhaps, in the hour of death, God reproach you thus—"We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed; let us forsake her."[11]

SATURDAY

Christ Apprehended in the Garden.

1. Consider the wonderful blindness of a heart agitated by evil passion and excessive anger. For the soldiers had been cast to the ground by those two little words of Christ, and immediately forgetful of them, they dare to seize Him. Contemplate in this blindness the power and evil effect of anger, and seek in time to control it in yourself, lest if it increase it be difficult to cure, or else utterly destroy you.

2. Consider the words of Christ to the soldiers—"You are come out as it were to a robber, with swords and clubs."[12] And yet He permitted them to take Him. Here gather together all the bitterness and difficulties which disturb you in Religion.

[11] Jeremias li. 9. [12] St. Matt. xxvi. 55.

Compare them with the treatment usually bestowed on thieves; in truth you will find a difference. If, therefore, for your sake Christ would be treated like a thief, why are you so sensitive? Why for less cause do you murmur and burn with indignation, and perchance, for this reason, suffer to diminish in you that loving affection which you should entertain for your vocation, and for various individuals?

3. Consider the arrest of Christ itself; how fiercely they rushed upon Christ, seized, and bound Him. Compassionate your most beloved Lord, so ignominiously and cruelly treated. See whether with this ignominy you can compare all those humiliations and injuries which so often you have endured with murmurs and detractions. Be ashamed, O proud man, and correct yourself effectually.

4. Consider the fear of the disciples, impelled by which, on the taking of Christ, "all, leaving Him, fled."[18] Hence learn two things: (1) How weak is even a good man in temptation, when deprived of the efficacious help of God; how impotent to resist. Therefore, lest you come to this, see what it is which hinders God from giving His powerful grace. (2) Fear, by the example of the disciples, lest you too desert Christ. Be ashamed, too, of having so many times deserted Him, not like the Apostles from the fear of death, but from a much more trifling cause, and through human respect, when to avoid giving pain to a companion you have been drawn by his example or counsel to offend God.

[18] St. Matt. xxvi. 56.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

Christ's Journey to the House of Annas.

1. Consider how Christ is taken to the house and tribunal of Annas. He is dragged with violence on the part of the soldiers, but goes most willingly on His own part, that there for your sake He may be saturated with insults. Compare with the house of Annas all those places to which obedience may ever send you; you will certainly find that they in no wise resemble the house of Annas. Purpose firmly to be always content with any place whatsoever in Religion, of residence, or habitation.

2. Consider the manner wherein Christ performed that journey; not on horseback, nor in a carriage; not borne by Angels, or through the air, as He might, if He so willed, have chosen, is He led and drawn to the house of Annas; but on foot, and bound. Learn hence in what manner it becomes you to perform your journeys, and what inconveniences you should embrace therein, to conform yourself to your Lord.

3. Consider at what time Christ performed that journey. At night; namely, a time of rest, even to slaves, a time usually granted even to thieves in their prison. Seeing your Lord so spent by prayer, by that bloody sweat, by that sadness and heaviness in the Garden, compassionate Him from your heart, and for the love of Him, offer yourself most freely to Him for all labours, to be undertaken even at all hours and times of rest.

4. Consider the ignominy of Christ, Who was taken like a wicked thief; yea, dragged along rapidly

by night, noisily, by a difficult and inconvenient road; all of which He most patiently endured. Contemplating this with your mind, compassionate your Lord from the depth of your soul, and resolve to have a perfect indifference, endued with which you may suffer yourself to be led to any places or duties whatsoever for obedience sake, even if they be contrary to your inclinations.

MONDAY.

Christ Judged in the House of Annas.

1. Consider the modesty, the interior and exterior humility of Christ, standing before the tribunal of Annas, and the patience displayed in His every movement and gesture. Gather from each point some help for the imitation of Christ, when you stand before better judges than Annas.

2. Consider the presumption of Annas, who dared to question Christ concerning "His disciples and His doctrine." Oh, how often do you also examine into things and persons, inquiring about them, not only with curiosity, but with presumption and malice, either to injure them, or from some other bad motive, whereby you offend both God and your neighbour, and lose your own peace and simplicity. Having recognized the wickedness of this conduct, blush, and amend.

3. Consider the words of Christ in reply to Annas —"I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them

who have heard what I have spoken unto them; behold, they know what things I have said."[1] Comparing each of these words with your own words, see whether the same can be said of yours as Christ said of His. Conform yourself in future to Christ, and cut off such conversations as cannot be carried on openly, or which you would not have spread abroad; for those which require secrecy can hardly be free from sin.

4. Consider the irreproachable life and words of Christ, Who dared to commit Himself to the report of the Jews regarding His doctrine, about which Annas was inquiring. Oh, how glorious it is to the servant of God to have so good a conscience regarding his deeds and words, that he can be fearless even of the reports of his enemies! Is it so with thee? Be ashamed, and strive to be such that you need fear no reports; and this, not out of contempt or pride, but in the confidence of a well-spent life.

TUESDAY.

On the Blow given to Christ in the House of Annas.

1. Consider the great offence offered to Christ most innocent in the blow which was given to Him by that angry servant. You will recognize the greatness of the insult, by the excellence of the Person of Christ, and by His innocence, as well as by the majesty of that holy Face, which wonderfully rejoices the eyes of the Blessed in Heaven; and, again, from the very nature of that ignominy and

[1] St. John xviii. 20, 21.

insult. Having gathered together all the affronts that may possibly be offered to you in Religion, see how small they are; and hence, with how much affection of soul they are to be desired, especially when your sins deserve them.

2. Consider the patience of Christ, Who, although He would not even in this life leave unpunished the injuries of the servants of others, and those not a few, as appears from examples which may be remembered in the Sacred Scriptures and ecclesiastical history, yet avenged not this insult. Learn hence what is your duty in smaller affronts, and put away from you a spirit eager for revenge, and which seeks for it in word, deed, or omission.

3. Consider the consent of Christ, as God, to the blow inflicted on Him, without which consent that wretch could not have moved even a finger. See whether it becomes you to fly from the slightest occasions of suffering something for your God, and to seek all means of avoiding them, instead rather of choosing them voluntarily, and offering yourself for the endurance of everything, not occasioned however by your own sin.

4. Consider for what cause Christ willed to suffer in His blessed Face that ignominious insult and great disgrace. Truly it was to offer abundant satisfaction to the Eternal Father for your sins, committed in the misuse of your own face. Calling these to mind in an humble spirit and a contrite heart, blush, mourn, and compassionate Christ so treated on account of them; beg of Him forgiveness, and endeavour, by a holy use of all the features of your face, to atone for your past offences.

WEDNESDAY.

On the Answer of Christ after the Blow.

1. Consider the false calumny of that wretched servant in striking Christ, pretending that He had spoken irreverently to the High Priest. "Answerest Thou the High Priest so?"[2] On the other hand, call to memory the reverence, consideration, and meekness of Christ in answering the High Priest; and rejoice from the bottom of your heart if your good deeds, done for the love of your Lord, are misinterpreted to others; for thus they will give you an opportunity of suffering for Christ's sake.

2. Consider the necessity of Christ's answer. However much He might keep silence under other calumnies, He would nevertheless clear Himself of this one, to the end, as St. Cyprian remarks, that He might show in how much honour ecclesiastical Superiors are to be held, since He would not suffer the false accusation of irreverence towards them to pass uncleared, though He bore all other calumnies in silence. If, therefore, Christ would not suffer even so small a matter to fix itself as a stain on His good name, learn you how grievous are the sins wont to be committed by you against the authority of Superiors, by murmurs, complaints, detraction, irreverence, insincerity, falsehood, disobedience, obstinacy, &c.

3. Consider the words of Christ to the impious servant—"If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me? Which

[2] St. John xviii. 22.

words to the servant are free from all sharp and biting epithets or names, free from threats, imprecations, rebukes, exaggeration of the offence offered, and from other stinging words, such as you employ against the friends of God, your brethren, &c. Blush, mourn, recognize at length, and bewail the evil nature of your impatience, and conform yourself to Christ.

4. Consider how often, though in another sense, these words of Christ apply to you—"If I have spoken well, why strikest thou Me?" For how often do you receive in an offended spirit the pious admonitions of your equals and superiors, striking Christ, as it were, in them, when you should rather thank Him for the benefit. Bewail then your blindness, who infirm as you are, reject the remedies and the physicians, and amend.

THURSDAY.

Christ Sent from Annas to Caiaphas.

1. Consider the consultations of the Jews with Annas regarding Christ, held with the intention of injuring Him, which, nevertheless, He, the Innocent One, bore with a patient and joyful mind, ready to offer Himself for everything which should be decreed concerning Him. See whether you be equally ready to accept without reserve the deliberations of your Order, which are usually entered on regarding its members by friends, who purely desire and seek their good. Choose what is right in this matter, and embrace it in a courageous spirit.

2. Consider the sentence of Annas against Christ, sending Him to the tribunal of Caiaphas as a criminal; and wonder not if, by the hidden decrees of God, the innocent often pass for guilty. Desire this lot for yourself, that you may be as like to Christ as possible, through the many benefits to be found in it, and which you may think over.

3. Consider the manner in which Christ is sent to Caiaphas. For Annas does not trust Him, but, lest He should escape, sends Him away bound as a thief, and surrounded by guards. Why therefore should you be disturbed, when certain things are appointed concerning you which look as though your Superiors mistrusted you; whereas, through the frailty of your very nature, and your past and even present failings you know yourself liable to so many sins, and in need of watchfulness from others; yea, rather give thanks to God that you may be guarded as much as possible, and everywhere, and thus be the more surely preserved from offending God, at least in the sight of men.

4. Consider Christ thus bound and guarded by soldiers, going to the palace of Caiaphas; accompany Him in spirit, and, and contemplate each of His exterior and interior actions; exciting in yourself a love of those virtues which He displays during this journey—to the world, Angels, and men; a feeling of compassion towards Him thus ignominiously treated; an ardent desire of suffering similar things for His love, and a deep sentiment of gratitude for this His charity in bearing so much for your sake.

FRIDAY.

The Denial of St. Peter.

1. Consider the grievous fall of Peter, who three times sinned most grievously, denying that he knew Christ, denying that he was His disciple, and confirming this with an oath. Here compare yourself with Peter, and recognizing yourself to be in many ways surpassed by him, learn never to trust yourself, never to presume on your own strength, but to serve Christ in fear.

2. Consider the place wherein Peter denied Christ, namely, a court full of bad people. Learn hence that we must try hard in such places not to fall into serious sins, through the society of the wicked, bad examples and counsels, and grievous occasions of sin. Therefore, as much as you can, fly such places, give thanks that you are far from them, and, if you be in them of necessity, act cautiously.

3. Consider the person who led Peter into this sin —a maid-servant, forsooth. If therefore, once urged on by a woman, he was led into such a crime, consider how many perish by keeping company with the wicked. Examine with whom you associate, and in what manner, and see whether, in a priestly house, you deny not Christ, if not in word at least in deed, if not in great things at least in small.

4. Consider the cause for which Peter denied Christ, namely, the fear of death and the danger of his life. Hence you shall take occasion to grieve that you have nearly always denied Christ by your deeds, for a much smaller cause. Be ashamed

therefore, and bewail your wickedness. For the future admit indeed nothing in yourself, either of fear or love, which may lead you to offend so good a Lord. See if there be any such thing in you, that you may cast it out. This you will see by examining the occasions and causes whereby many deny God, either by not persevering in Religion, or by leading, at least secretly, a bad life therein.

SATURDAY.

Peter's Perseverance in Sin, and Recovery from It.

1. Consider the blindness which sometimes overspreads even the just when they have once grievously fallen, since, after the lapse of about an hour, Peter again denied Christ, and all that time returned not to himself, although concious of so grave a crime. Who shall dare to promise himself a speedy recovery after once losing the grace of God? Proceed then cautiously; if you have the grace of God guard it carefully, lest, having lost it, you rise not easily again, and, lest you come to this, fly those things whereby the careless fall and lose it.

2. Consider the love and care of Christ for His own, for at last He had compassion on His Apostle —"The Lord turning, looked on Peter."[3] Contemplate the Face of Christ looking on Peter; consider with what countenance, how full of compassion, how paternally He looked at him who denies Him, and burn with love towards so merciful a Lord, Who looks so kindly on His enemies, and how much

[3] St. Luke xxii. 61.

more on His friends. Aim at this—to be His most dear friend, especially when He looks so benignantly from Heaven upon you, sinning more often and more grievously.

3. Consider the penitence of Peter, who, "going out, wept bitterly." He wept not as long as he was with the wicked men in the hall, but after he had gone from thence. He wept not lightly, but bitterly. See from this what you have to do after your sins, you who have offended more often and grievously than Peter.

4. Consider the long duration of Peter's penitence, for, as historians write, he wept for his sin through his whole life, so that, his eyes growing weak from tears, they were blood-shot until his very death. And you, indeed, how often immediately after the commission of a sin do you laugh and exult, as though you had done no wrong! How soon do you leave off mourning for it! How quickly do you live as freely as though you were not to be judged by God! Blush, be ashamed, and amend in this regard.

PASSION SUNDAY.

They bear False Witness of Christ before Caiaphas.

1. Consider the multitude and power of Christ's adversaries for "the Chief Priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus."[1] Gather from this that you may not presume upon your state, because even therein, by the excess of your passions,

[1] St. Matt. xxvi. 59.

and by inordinate desires, you may fall, even as those men fell who were dedicated to sacred functions. Lest you come to this, avoid the ways whereby these men arrived at such grievous offence against God.

2. Consider the wicked intention of those Priests, for "they sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death." Think over everything that can possibly be said or invented against you in Religion, even for calumny's sake; never can it come to anything worthy of death, and yet how often are you disturbed by things said of you! How often those things which are true, and said of you from a good intention, appear to you as injurious, and render bitter the sweet yoke of Christ! Is this to imitate Christ? Is this to give up the world? Be ashamed, proud man, unworthy of the name of a Religious; for a Religious without patience in adversity is truly a worldling.

3. Consider the sanctity of Christ, against Whom those impious men could find no accusation, though they tried their best, and "many false witnesses had come in." Rejoice with your Lord, so irreproachable, so holy, and blush in surveying your own life, in which any one may easily discover many things deserving grave reproof. Amend, and so live in future that you too may be blameless, for the consolation and glory of your Lord.

4. Consider the patience of Christ, Who was silent, and answered nothing to the false witness. And you, indeed, how often do you answer just reproofs, falsely denying, diminishing, &c. Correct therefore what is past, both by making known what you have wrongly concealed and by living otherwise for the future.

MONDAY.

On the Words of Caiaphas to Christ, and Christ's Condemnation by Him.

1. Consider Christ's answer to Caiaphas, who adjured Him by the living God to say if He were Christ the Son of God, to whom your Lord confessed Himself to be the Son of God, although knowing certainly that Caiaphas asked with the desire of injuring Him, and, indeed, that such an answer would injure Him. If therefore, Christ thus obeys the impious Pontiff, whose questioning put Him into imminent peril, with what face do you, bound by a vow of obedience, reluctantly obey, and hide those things which, voluntarily and unasked, you ought to make known, especially when the questions are for your welfare, either in purging and preserving you from evil or in urging you to good. Blame your hardness and infidelity, and correct them.

2. Consider that impious mouth of Caiaphas, who declared Christ a blasphemer because He confessed Himself to be the Son of God and the future Judge. You indeed adore and confess Him as such; detest the blasphemy of Caiaphas, and in it all heresies hostile to Christ's excellence, and think how patiently you should suffer all manner of insults and contumelies, since they can never be so injurious to you as were the blasphemies ascribed to Christ by this most infamous man.

3. Consider the decree of Caiaphas and those present; Christ is declared "guilty of death," because He had confessed Himself the Son of God. Compare

with this decree all those things which have been pronounced concerning you or decreed or spoken against you, whether by your equals or by others; you will never find them thus injurious to you, and yet how much they disturb you, deserving as you are of the severest punishment on account of your sins. See how you should act in this respect for the future.

4. Consider the interior state of our Lord during that time; how peaceful was His soul, how joyful, how full of desire for yet more grievous sufferings, how far removed from any vindictive spirit. On the other hand, compare with this interior state of Christ the state of your own soul, disturbed by the smallest injuries. Be ashamed, and purpose seriously to amend.

TUESDAY.

On the Sufferings of Christ in the House of Caiaphas.

1. Consider how the impious servants spat in the Face of Christ. Dwell upon the grievous nature of this insult and injury, both from the consideration of its vileness, and from the excellence of the Face of Christ, as well as the majesty of His Person. Therefore compassionate Christ deeply, cleanse in spirit this foulness from the Face of Christ, and wash it with your tears. Compare your wrongs with this; you will find them indeed much more trifling, though they appear to you intolerable.

2. Consider how the Jews covered Christ's Face with a veil, both that they might mock Him, and

that they might strike Him more freely when unseen by Him; for thus they thought themselves invisible to Him. In this acknowledge that your own misconduct surpasses that of the Jews. For, knowing with certainty that all things are open to the eyes of God, even the hidden secrets of the heart, how many times nevertheless have you not been ashamed to sin, and even now you blush not at doing those things which you would blush to do in the eyes of men. Shame, shame; blush for yourself, and purpose serious amendment.

3. Consider how at the same time those wretches struck Christ with their palms and fists, plucking even His hair and beard, as Isaias foretold.[2] And having seen this insult to Christ, burn with indignation against your sins which caused Him so much ignominy. Acknowledge how deserving you are on account of your sins that all manner of humiliation and confusion should come upon you, and that you should be ignominiously treated by all, both in word and deed; and bewail and correct your immortification in this respect.

4. Consider the various blasphemies of the Jews against Christ. For they said He was not a prophet, crying out—"Prophesy, who is He that struck Thee?" And many other blasphemies they vomited forth. You, by the example of Christ, prepare and rouse yourself to the endurance of all insults and reproaches, since never will you suffer such as these; and bewail your great impatience on more trifling occasions.

[2] Isaias l. 6.

WEDNESDAY.

The Accusations against Christ before Pilate.

1. Consider the appellations given to Christ by those traitors before the tribunal of Pilate. (1) They called Him a malefactor, deserving to be delivered up to him for judgment. (2) A subverter of the Jewish people by the preaching of false doctrines. (3) A foe to Cæsar's government in that He forbade paying him tribute. (4) A proud and ambitious man, as unlawfully ascribing to Himself the dignity of Messiah and King of the Jews. Considering each of these accusations, see how ignominious they were in themselves, and how injurious to Christ, Who was endowed with the very opposite virtues. Learn to repress all inordinate feelings against your neighbour, especially at the beginning, when they first arise, since they so blind men, that they lead them even to accuse the most innocent; yea, even to attack Christ Himself. Think over the motives of such feelings in yourself, your neglect in repressing them, and their causes, and purpose amendment, having implored Divine help for their speedy and vigorous subjugation. At the same time excite yourself to the patient, willing, and joyous endurance for God's sake, of all calumnies and detractions, or, as Seneca the heathen writes, "bear them valiantly, honourably, courageously."

2. Consider the interior spirit of Christ under these accusations: what were then His sentiments towards His accusers; and having compared therewith your own interior spirit under lighter sufferings, and those

justly deserved, be ashamed, beg pardon from God, and correct yourself.

3. Consider the two-fold silence of Christ in all these things. (1) When the Chief Priests accused Him of many things, Jesus answered nothing. (2) When Pilate said, "Dost not thou hear what great testimonies they allege against Thee?" He nevertheless "answered him to never a word, so that the Governor wondered exceedingly." Excite in your soul a tender relish for this patience of Christ, detest your vile pride, which has led you to palliate your own defects by so many lies and curses, and resolve to bear willingly not only true, but even false accusations, for Christ's sake, having well thought over the causes which should urge you to endure them with a most even mind.

4. Consider how disgraceful and disquieting a thing it is to accuse Christ falsely in His members and brethren, how much it displeases Him, how it resembles the actions of the devil; take heed for the future not to commit the like sin, and for past failings earnestly beg pardon of God.

THURSDAY.

Christ in the House of Herod.

1. Consider the contemptuous treatment of Christ in Herod's house. Dragged already as a malefactor before three tribunals, namely, of Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate, He permitted Himself again to be led ignominiously to Herod, that He might omit no opportunity of suffering every kind of evil for your

sake. Examine how far you shun, not only the different places and persons through whom you may suffer something, but also the occasions of patience from one person or one office alone. See whether this be corresponding to a God Who bears such things for you and purpose amendment.

2. Consider the reiterated accusation of the Priests and Scribes even in Herod's house. Wherein recognize the persistency of a mind in anger against any one, and the hardness of an evil feeling when not instantly and powerfully resisted; whence it happens that even the innocent are spoken against in things partially false, and mischief is made. Examine whether you give way to the like feelings towards your neighbour, either by judging him rashly, and as it were accusing him, in your heart only, or by doing so openly. If you find anything of this kind, mourn, and purpose a serious amendment, calling to mind the reasons you have for striving against such feelings.

3. Consider the humility of Christ, in performing no miracle upon Herod, who sought for one, when He might easily have done it. You, indeed, not only conceal no gifts, whether of nature or grace, displaying them all with vain boasting, but even ascribe to yourself those which you have not. Consider how disgraceful are both these faults in a man who seeks the contempt of the world, and who has embraced the state of humility, and amend.

4. Consider the other insult to Christ, when He was mocked by Herod and his soldiers, and sent in ridicule clothed in a white garment to Pilate, which insult the most loving Jesus bore for your sake with a joyful mind. Examine whether you suffer patiently

for His sake in Religion, slighter insults, whether in mean clothing, or otherwise, and rouse yourself to a serious imitation of Christ for His love's sake.

FRIDAY.

On the Sufferings of Christ in the House of Pilate.

3. Consider the Scourging of Christ, and three circumstances therein, which show that kind of punishment to have been exceedingly severe and ignominious. First, the tenderness of Christ's virginal Body and its very delicate nature, in which small pain occasioned a great sense of suffering. Secondly, the rage of the executioners; for when Pilate wished to save Him from death he gave Him up to their cruelty, that, seeing the Flesh of Christ grievously wounded and torn, they might, inspired by pity, desist from seeking His death. Whence, as was revealed to St. Gertrude, the stripes inflicted on Christ amounted to five thousand four hundred and forty-six. Thirdly, the nature of this torment, appointed by the Roman custom for the vilest persons and lowest of the people. Having dwelt on these things, compassionate Christ thus mangled for your sins, bewail them bitterly, and as some reparation, desire ardently that it may be granted you to suffer something grievous; although never have you suffered, nor can you suffer, such bitter pains; being nevertheless deserving of them, both on account of your past sins, the remission of whose punishment is uncertain, and on account of your present sins.

2. Consider Christ submitting His Body to so terrible a punishment, not refusing the most severe blows, not seeking to be treated more gently, not asking that the number of stripes should be diminished. Look at yourself, on the other hand, and if you find yourself shunning slighter corporeal sufferings, whether in food, or clothing, or any other matter, be ashamed, mourn, and promise Christ to amend.

3. Consider the crown, woven of the sharpest thorns, pressed deeply into the sacred Head of Christ, torturing it most grievously, and a reed given to Him in place of a sceptre, as to one ambitious of empire, in order that the body might be tormented by the stings of the thorns, and the mind by the inflicted mark of a grievous ambition. Wherein, beside the great pain of Christ in mind and body, consider His love in omitting no suffering for your sake. Burn, therefore, with love towards your King, Who distributes eternal crowns to the Saints in Heaven; testify your love for Him by willingly suffering in future, for His sake alone, all that can trouble you in body and mind, especially in your self-esteem, whether labours, duties, words, or acts of others.

4. Consider the cuffs, blows on the head, and spittings inflicted on Christ in the same place, without, however, any motion of excitement, or impatience. Then examine how far more trifling are the things which disturb you in Religion. Be ashamed, O delicate member of Christ, under a Head so afflicted, and seriously amend.

SATURDAY.

On the Words of Pilate to Christ.

1. Consider the words of Pilate speaking to Christ —"Art Thou the King of the Jews? Art Thou King then? Whence art Thou?"[3] Wherein you will see the modesty of this heathen, a judge in the highest place, who might, moreover, have spoken more severely and sharply to Christ, seriously accused as He was by the whole Council of Jews. Wherefore, if such moderation of speech was displayed by a heathen judge, how much more does it become a Religious, even on those occasions which appear to demand severity and sharpness of speech. See whether you employ such moderation to your inferiors, equals, and superiors; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

2. Consider the first answer of Christ to Pilate— "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? Thus Christ inquires from Pilate, just as though He were ignorant of it, although He knew the most hidden things of the human heart. If, therefore, Christ, at a time when He was most in need of Pilate's benevolence, concealed the gift of knowing secrets, lest He might be thought great by Pilate, learn how you ought to abhor all ambitious search after human favours, whether for avoiding that which you fear, or obtaining that which you desire; and if there be anything here to correct, correct it.

3. Consider Pilate's other words to Christ—"Thy

[3] St. John xviii. xix.

own nation, and the Chief Priests, have delivered Thee up to me: What hast Thou done?" Whence learn two things; first, that the state of those living in Religion is a happy one, which state our own nation, that is, Catholics themselves, and ecclesiastics who live at liberty, often carp at and calumniate, and therefore rejoice that your Lord leads you by the same way to His Heavenly Kingdom as He led His only-begotten Son. Secondly, take care lest by your actions you give occasion to those who are without to slander your name, or the name of Religion; and as Christ gave no cause for calumnies and reproaches, so do you give none. Look if it be so with you, and amend what needs amendment.

4. Consider the other words of Christ to Pilate—"For this was I born, and for this I came into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth." Having thought over these words, and impressed them deeply in your mind, burn with the love of truth, that you may show yourself always desirous of it; never, through human respect, or through the fear of shame and pain, or through feelings of private friendship, or through any other cause, swerving in the very least from truth, but keeping yourself entirely free from all exaggerations and equivocations. Wherefore, if formerly you have failed in this respect, detest your false and insincere tongue, and change the manner of your speech.

PALM SUNDAY.

On the Disposition of Pilate regarding Christ.

1. Consider the fair disposition of Pilate towards Christ; for having heard grave accusations against Him from numerous and exalted personages, he believed them not, but would hear from Christ what He had to say in answer to them. Here learn a most necessary lesson—never to believe entirely those who speak evil of their neighbours. Examine the reasons for this, that you may be most firmly strengthened in the truth, so very necessary for the avoiding of many faults and disturbances.

2. Consider the favourable disposition of Pilate towards Christ; for when Christ excused not Himself, and remained nearly always silent, and never expressly declared Himself innocent, Pilate nevertheless boldly said to His enemies—"I find no cause in Him." Wherefore, give thanks to the Eternal Father for giving to His most innocent Son, and your Lord, His very judge for patron and protector; and on the other hand, conceive a firm trust in Divine Providence, Who will never leave you without defence, if such be necessary, and if you render yourself worthy, through His grace, by a similar innocence and purity of life. See, therefore, in order to be worthy of this protection, what to cut off, lest you impede it, and what to acquire, that you may merit it.

3. Consider the constancy of Pilate in defending Christ; for he defended Him again after His return from Herod, as he had done before, prompted also by the example of Herod, by whom He had been

sent back uncondemned. Here, with tender affection of soul, meditate on the loving charity of the Divine Heart, whereby It defends Its own dear ones; having called to mind the examples of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, David, Susanna, our holy Father Ignatius, and other Saints, whom our Lord wonderfully defended from their enemies. Throw yourself into the bosom of your God and your Lord, He will be your Protector, Defender, and Refuge. On the other hand, take most earnest heed that you wound not your neighbour by false and doubtful complaints, nor by treachery and other wicked means, for the averting whereof God may be forced to rise up in his defence; wherein if you have offended in some degree, give satisfaction—to God, by a good confession and sorrow—to thy neighbour, in some way approved by the Church.

4. Consider the intention of Pilate in determining that Christ should be scourged—he wished Him to endure this punishment, that He might escape the grievous death called for by the Jews. Learn hence the way of God's dealing, in suffering the innocent often to endure slight though annoying trials, both from Himself and from His Ministers, in order to chase away sins not well cleansed, or to preserve them from future sins, or to give matter for merit and reward. Blame therefore your blindness, whereby, not perceiving this, you receive trials with impatience, and deprive yourself of the good which you procure from them when borne with a calm spirit.

MONDAY.

Christ Condemned to be Crucified.

1. Consider the pious zeal of Pilate's wife, when she sent to him, saying—"Have thou nothing to do with that just Man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him."[1] Excite in yourself a most tender feeling of joy, because there was found one poor woman to take the part of your Lord in these His great afflictions; and burn with great zeal to help in future, as much as in you lies, those who are unjustly afflicted; for in them you will help Christ, Who said—"As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me."[2] Hereupon detest the bitterness and and inhumanity of your own heart which remains unmoved at the sufferings of others.

2. Consider the wickedness of the Jews, who preferred the release of Barabbas, cast into prison for sedition and murder, to that of Christ, Whom in their consciences they knew to be most innocent, and worthy of love and of help, at least on account of the beneficial cures obtained from Him. Hence, excite in yourself a great desire of every kind of contempt, so that not only the good, but even those who, worse than yourself, may be preferred as more excellent than you; and detest your pride, which makes you desire to be preferred before every one, when, if you will, you can find many things to inspire self-contempt.

3. Consider Pilate's thoughtless and frivolous care

[1] St. Matt. xxvii. 19. [2] St. Matt. xxv. 40

of his conscience, when he thought, by washing his hands, to free himself from the most grievous crime of Christ's condemnation, knowing Him nevertheless to be innocent, and not deserving of this death, to which at the persuasion of the Jews, he was about to condemn Him. Oh, how many there are who in a similar manner cleanse their consciences only by a superficial, and not a sincere, confession, one neither full nor entire, and who do not care to exterminate their own faults by the proper means; whence they are in evil odour both with God and His Saints. See whether you be of this number, and if you find yourself to have erred, amend quickly.

4. Consider the sentence of death pronounced against Christ. Mourn that your sins were the cause thereof; weep bitterly for them; beg mercy of Christ, as it were about to be slain for you; and in, order to make satisfaction, resolve to suffer willingly every sentence and judgment which may cause you some suffering in this life.

TUESDAY.

The Crucifixion of Christ.

1. Consider Christ carrying His Cross, which was so heavy, that it was necessary to lay hold of Simon the Cyrenean, and make him carry it after Jesus. Consider Him wearing His own clothes, the cloak being taken off that so He might be better known, and brought to greater confusion.. Thus your Lord permits nothing to be left out whereby His grief and

affliction both of body and mind may be increased. And you, do you not seek for light crosses, leaving the heavy ones! How often you seek to reduce them, diminish them, and suffer as little as possible! Is this to imitate Christ, Who said—"Whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."[8] Be ashamed, and bewail your blindness in diminishing those things whereby there is prepared for you an eternal and celestial glory, incomprehensible in this life.

2. Consider the crowd of people and of women accompanying Christ, and weeping over Him; and His words to them—"Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold the days shall come wherein they will say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" From which words gather these sentiments —(1) Confusion, that you weep not for Christ, as did that rough crowd, who knew not Christ as you know Him; (2) grief for your sins, on which account Christ bade those women weep for their children; (3) fear of the Judgment, at which hour the wicked, who were the cause of Christ's death, and made no use of its fruits, shall say—"Mountains, fall on us;" (4) desire of suffering something for Christ, since He, a green and flourishing wood, became dried up, and suffered such grievous things for love of you.

3. Consider with Euthymius the preparation for Christ's crucifixion. For He accepted not the good

[8] St. Luke xiv. 27.

wine mingled with myrrh, which was usually given for the comfort of the sufferers, that they might feel less pain in their weakness or fear, and that at least their senses might be deadened; but He tasted another wine mingled with gall, that He might perceive the bitterness, yet took it not all, lest He should be strengthened. In this, as it were His agony, Christ shuns consolation, and seeks mortifications, to teach you to live in a similar manner, as far as obedience permits it, at a time when you are in need of human solace and help.

4. Consider the crucifixion of Christ; the iron nails in the nervous parts, which were the more sensitive to the pain inflicted by those enraged ministers. Compassionate Christ; grieve over the causes of His crucifixion, and think by what means you may correspond with Christ, Who loves you so much and bears so much for you.

WEDNESDAY.

The Words of Christ on the Cross.

1. Consider the words of Christ to the Eternal Father—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;"[4] again these words—"My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?"[5] and afterwards—"Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit."[6] From the first, learn to love your enemies, and be ashamed because you do not love even your friends and benefactors, if you have anything to suffer from them; and promise a solid amendment to

[4] St. Luke xxiii. 34. [5] St. Matt. xxvii. 47.
[6] St. Luke xxiii. 46.

Christ crucified for your sake. From the next, recognize the grievousness of Christ's sufferings and of your sins. From the last, the bliss of Christ's Soul, which from its innocence was worthy of the glory of Heaven. Hence conceive a hatred of your sins, that you may mourn and fly from them; and the desire of a holy life, whereby, through the merits of Christ crucified, you may be worthy to go straight to Heaven after your death.

2. Consider the words of Christ to His Mother, when commending St. John to her—"Woman, behold thy son."[7] Wherein admire Christ's purity and love; His purity, because He addressed His Mother by no other name, without soft or effeminate titles, although she was most dear to Him, and worthy of every honourable name. Hence examine your own conversations, and also the epithets and titles whereby you name those dear to you; see whether they are conformable to the words of Christ, and resolve upon what you should do in this respect. Consider, indeed, His love, because, when dying in such torments, He forgets not His beloved Disciple, but commends him to His Mother in His own place. Burn, therefore, with love towards Christ, Who loves His own so dearly, and desire with all your heart to be dear to Him.

3. Consider the words of Christ to St. John—"Behold thy Mother." Oh, how happy was he, given to such a Mother! Consider what it becomes thee to have, or not to have, in order to deserve that Christ may give the Blessed Virgin to you as your Mother.

4. Consider the words of Christ to that thief who defended Him from the reproaches of the other,

[7] St. John xix. 26.

saying—"Neither dost thou fear God, seeing that thou art under the same condemnation, and we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done no evil." To whom, when he said, "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom," Christ replied—"This day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."[8] Here thank the good thief for this defence of Christ, having excited in yourself a great love towards him on this account. Imitate him also, begging from Christ the possession of His Heavenly Kingdom, and a life so holy, that in the hour of death you may deserve to hear in your soul—"To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise."

MAUNDY THURSDAY.

The Sufferings of Christ while Hanging on the Cross.

1. Consider the great confusion and shame which Christ endured on the Cross, stripped of all His garments, hanging in the open day before an innumerable multitude of hostile men, who mocked Him without any cause. This shame brought to the Soul of Christ perhaps a greater grief than His other sufferings in the flesh, for a modest man would rather die than be thus stripped naked. Be ashamed of yourself, who with such pains dost avoid the slightest confusion before men, and yet blushest not before the eyes of God, to Whom you know that all your sins, past and present, lie open. Yea, when you blush sometimes to reveal them to your confessor, in the secret tribunal of your

[8] St. Luke xxiii. 43.

conscience, as they are known to God. Correct what is amiss, and amend for the future.

2. Consider the immense sufferings of Christ in all His Body, already so lacerated by scourges and thorns, now dug through with nails, and hanging upon them. Consider at the same time the cause of these sufferings, namely, your sins. Compassionate Him, therefore, in such grief; embrace, and kiss Him, hanging in such torments for you; beg His pardon; offer a ready will to suffer for His sake all bodily discomforts; those things which so often you shun, purpose in future to wish for, and to seek, and to embrace for His honour.

3. Consider the mockery and derision, and the great blasphemies which He endured hanging on the Cross; for they reproached Him as a liar, one given to vainglory, proud, not able to come down from the Cross, falsely boasting Himself to be the Son of God. On the other hand, call to mind all those things which can be said against you; how trifling they are, how small, how often merited by you. Yet you bear hardly anything with an even mind, and yet would pass for a follower of Christ. Be ready, therefore, to endure anything that can be said against you.

4. Consider Christ hanging on the Cross in supreme pain of Soul and Body, yet seeking no solace or alleviation and bearing all with perfect patience. And hence learn, upon the cross of Religion, to bear all bitter things with like patience. Beg grace for this, give great thanks to Christ for this His Passion, and as a solace therein, offer Him amendment in this especially, that the crosses of Religious life shall now no more be bitter to you.

GOOD FRIDAY.

The Death of Christ.

1. Consider the death of Christ, full of innumerable sufferings. For it was destitute of all consolation, and full of affliction; through your sins, through the multitude of those who would not, as He foreknew, make use of the means of salvation procured by His death; and, again, through the many sufferings which He endured while hanging on the Cross. All these things, and others similar to them, think over one by one. Compassionate your Lord; embrace Him dying. Commend to Him your soul, that He may withdraw it as happily from your body as He yielded up His own Soul into the hands of His Father. That you may the more easily and certainly attain to this, examine what you have to do and to avoid.

2. Consider the manner in which He died, namely, crying with a loud voice, bowing down His Head, commending His Spirit into the hands of His Father. Think over in your mind what that cry, what that bowing down of the head, mean; this you will discover by reflecting on the reasons for which sensible men are wont to cry out and bow down their heads; and gather from each thought such sentiments as may cause you to show forth love towards Christ, hatred of your sins, desire of amendment, and satisfaction for your sins, and for the benefits of Christ.

3. Consider the value of Christ's death, and the fruit proceeding therefrom, both for the salvation of

men, and their manifold good, together with the Sacraments of the Church, so efficacious and salutary, which spring from His death. Having excited within you a great joy that God has placed you in a Church so rich in good gifts, so abounding in remedies for your ills, burn with a seraphic love towards Jesus dying and pouring out on you from His Cross and death so many and such great benefits, and reproach yourself for your exceeding malice, which causes you to experience so little fruit from Christ's death.

4. Consider the sentiments wherewith the Eternal Father accepted the death of Christ, in satisfaction for your sins, as a holocaust of infinite value, sufficient to blot out and avert every evil from the world; and if you be a living member of this dying Head, unite with this agonizing sacrifice of your Head all your sins, that you may obtain remission of their guilt and punishment, and all the good you have, your limbs, senses, powers, actions, and omissions, that you may obtain an abundant blessing, conferring on you innumerable gifts of grace, and finally a happy death and immediate entrance into celestial glory.

HOLY SATURDAY.

On the Burial of Christ.

1. Consider the grief of the Blessed Virgin and of the holy women who had accompanied Christ to His death, before, during, and after His burial; how bitter was that grief, how full of wonderful love towards Christ, and hatred towards the sins of the

world, on account of which Christ was dead. Compare with their tears the hardness of your heart in bewailing the death of Christ; blush, and be indignant with yourself because you are so ungrateful.

2. Consider the causes and motives of this sorrow, and see how many more reasons you have for weeping over the death of Christ, and yet how dry you are. Having, therefore, discovered the reasons of this aridity, deplore them and amend.

3. Consider the admirable zeal of Joseph of Arimathea for Christ, boldly begging from Pilate the Body of Christ for burial, which he obtained. From this his zeal, learn to do everything which is your duty for your Lord, without human respect and fear, and to apply yourself chiefly to those things which you most fear. Gather together the motives for which you are bound to conquer yourself in such things.

4. Consider the pious service of Joseph and Nicodemus in burying the Body of Christ. For Joseph having bought a clean linen cloth wrapped His Body therein, Nicodemus anointed It with myrrh and aloes, whereof he had brought a hundred pound weight, and thus, binding It in the linen cloth with the spices, and wrapping the Head in a separate napkin. they buried It in Joseph's garden, in a new sepulchre hewn in stone, wherein no man had yet been laid, and rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre. Having meditated well upon each of these things, congratulate Christ upon this honour. Give thanks to the Eternal Father that He would have the blessed Body of Christ respected, at least after death, and treated better than He would have It treated in life; and praise and extol in spirit the

pious affection of these men towards Christ. Learn indeed with what affection to treat Christ, and how to offer Him all that is most perfect and most pure, since you have more knowledge of the excellence of Christ, and receive greater benefits from Him than these two Jews who were so devoted to Him.

EASTER SUNDAY.

1. Consider the coming of the Soul of Christ into His Body laid in the sepulchre. Contemplate, and as it were spiritually taste, the affections of the Soul of Christ with regard to His Body. The principal sentiment was a most tender love, as to a faithful companion, which had helped Him to accomplish the will of His Eternal Father and the work of our redemption, for about thirty-four years. Imagine therefore how, humanly speaking, the Soul of Christ uniting itself to the Body, giving it life, and rendering it glorious by virtue of the Divinity, might address it most tenderly, greeting it, loving it, thanking it for the perpetual obedience which it had paid to the Soul, and to the will of God, and for its patience under the many torments and discomforts which Christ's life, so full of poverty and labour, had occasioned. Considering all this, break forth into similar affections towards it, saluting it with a tender feeling of devotion, as the abode of the Deity, the fountain of grace, the model of all virtue; as also most humbly adoring it, thanking it for the same reasons, and loving it with a most ardent affection of supernatural charity.

2. Consider the properties of Christ's Body raised from death—namely, its agility, subtlety, brightness, impassibility, immortality; and, again, the Wounds remaining therein, which are its great ornaments. And consider the perfect joy, unmixed with any sadness even in the inferior part of His Soul. Exult therefore at the sight of so much good in the resurrection of Christ's Humanity. Congratulate Him; thank God; take pleasure in the welfare of your Redeemer, Who has suffered so much for you. Beg from God a similar glory in the resurrection of your soul and body; and this purely for the greater honour and glory of Christ our Lord, your Head, Whose member you are.

3. Consider the means whereby Christ attained to so much glory in Soul and Body; and strive to adopt them as much as possible, so that there may be no disagreement between you and Christ your Head, and that under so worthy a Head you too should be worthy thereof, for its greater glory and adornment, and for the more ample triumph of Christ, not only in Himself, but in these His miserable members, by their victory over hell and the devil. That you may attain to this, beg from Christ glorified, as a first grace, that He may begin to show forth in you the most abundant fruits of His Passion, never failing, but perpetually growing, to the multiplication and continual increase of virtues, of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and of the supernatural aids of God's grace.

4. Consider the discourse of Christ Jesus with His most Holy Mother, whom before any other He willed to visit and to console with His presence. In this interview, meditate on the matter and manner

of their mutual discourse, assisting thereat as the very least of their servants, exciting in yourself pious sentiments by the thought of what their words together might be. Beg the Mother of God to give you up to her now glorious Son, for perpetual obedience, never to be broken by any sin, and that she may cause you to receive abundantly the fruits of His redemption; among other means, by the frequent reception of His glorious Body in the most Holy Eucharist, wherein adore it with great affection, and spiritually kiss it, existing in so many places. And after you have received the most Holy Eucharist, draw forth sentiments towards Jesus glorified, similar to the sentiments wherewith His most Blessed Mother received Him when He appeared to her.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the two disciples going from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and speaking together of all the things which had happened concerning Christ's Passion. Here consider their manner of walking, speaking, and the matter of their discourse, and strive to draw profit from all.

2. Consider the love of Christ, Who, wishing to deliver them from the sadness that oppressed them, and from their incredulity, benignly joined them, without immediately discovering Himself to them. And that He might do it the more kindly, He began to ask them—"What are the discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad?"[1] Ponder on these words; consider them as

[1] St. Luke xix. 17.

said to yourself; and when you speak, think that you hear these words from God, everywhere present—"What are these discourses?" And what you would not say in God's visible presence, say not henceforth at all, believing Him more certainly present than those things which you see with your bodily eyes.

3. Consider the words of the disciples regarding Christ, which they spoke to Christ Himself—"They said, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a Prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people, and how our Chief Priests and Princes delivered Him to death, and crucified Him." Ponder on these words according to the second method of prayer; and excite in yourself a feeling of joy for the praises spoken of Christ, as well as of love towards Him and of gratitude for His crucifixion endured for your sake, which His disciples commemorated.

4. Consider how Christ rebuked the disciples—"O foolish and slow of heart, to believe in all things which the Prophets have spoken!" Whence learn (1) that a sharp rebuke is not unsuitable to the most perfect meekness, when your faults require it; (2) apply to yourself these words, for you will find yourself in many things displaying a want of lively and practical faith, whilst you so live as though you did not believe in the punishment destined for sin, or in the rewards of virtue; as though you did not believe it better to please God than men, and better to offend men than God, nor that eternal good is to be sought with greater pains than temporal science, honours and comforts. Therefore, if there be anything to correct, correct it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider our Lord Jesus coming to His disciples and standing in the midst of them, saying—"Peace be to you. It is I; fear not."[2] In which words learn three lessons, very necessary to us when we are assembled together: (1) that we are to be peaceable, giving no occasion for breaking peace; (2) that we should then proceed as though we had our Lord Jesus present, or at least our Superior; (3) that we should so act as to have nothing to fear. To urge yourself thereto, seek out the reasons which show the duty of acting thus; and if you have failed in this respect, amend.

2. Consider Christ showing His Wounds to His disciples. "See My Hands and Feet; handle and see." Do you also gaze on those Wounds with tender affections, as fountains of God's benefits, as most certain signs of God's love towards you, as the work of your sins, as your refuge in troubles, as the incentives of your love towards our Lord Jesus; and according to these five considerations excite in your mind corresponding sentiments.

3. Consider Christ eating a portion of broiled fish and of honeycomb. Wherein consider the frugality of Christ's disciples, and the humility of Christ; for they had no costly food in the fish and honeycomb, and they did not take a whole fish, but part of a fish. It is a sign therefore that they were not addicted to gluttony, so as to take the whole fish, since, although they were so many, they left a por-

[2] St. Luke xxiv. 36.

tion, and our Lord Jesus did not disdain to accept what they had left. Here draw similar instructions regarding your food, very necessary in this state of poverty which you have professed.

4. Consider the words of Christ—"Thus it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise again from the dead the third day; and that penance and the remission of sins should be preached in His Name unto all nations." Wherein consider three things: (1) If it behoved Christ to suffer, how much more does it behove you! (2) if penance should be preached in Christ's Name, penance is necessary; how art thou without it? (3) He will have remission of sins preached in His Name. Give Him thanks, exult in the possession of such happiness, and of the certain hope of remission of sins, so long as you cooperate with Him.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider Peter with some of the other disciples. devoting himself to fishing, and occupied during that whole night without any result from so long and troublesome a labour. Consider his decency and decorum while fishing, in his bodily posture, in stripping himself of a part of his clothes, as well as in the calmness of mind shown forth in his voice and in all his work, without any noise or sign of impatience while conversing with his companions. Reflect upon your own behaviour, correct what needs correction, and gather the necessary instructions for yourself.

2. Consider Jesus telling them from the shore once

more to cast out their net; which done, they could not draw in the net for the multitude of fishes. Hence learn that all works are not in themselves equally useful, but that those are fruitful which are undertaken by the will and counsel of God. Examine whether you practice this doctrine and experience it in yourself, and endeavour specially to apply it in future.

3. Consider that Christ was not known to His disciples, but was first recognized by John. Consider the reasons why John was the first to know Him; see whether there be the same qualities in you, and endeavour to obtain them by the help of God.

4. Consider the love of our Lord Jesus towards His own, urging them namely to so good a draught of fish, and preparing for them a meal upon the shore; for "as soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread."[8] Then He ordered him to bring of the fish which he had taken, that they might be entertained more abundantly, and He invited them benignantly, saying, "Come and dine." Contemplate the Heart of our Lord Jesus, so kind, and so full of natural sweetness, Whose charity flows into all who belong to Him, learn how happy is he whom Jesus loves; for he is under the protection of Jesus even when he thinks it not. Strive by good actions to win His love.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the love of St. Mary Magdalene for Christ, as she stood by His sepulchre and wept.

[8] St. John xxi. 9.

Join her as a pious companion, exciting in yourself similar affections. Ponder upon her thoughts; with what affections of her will she was moved towards our Lord Jesus, from Whom she had received the remission of her sins, and from Whose own lips she knew with certainty that she was forgiven.

2. Consider with your mental eyes how that beloved handmaiden of Christ wept; how she dried her tears; with what motion of hands and eyes, demonstrating the vehemence of her internal emotions; and having reflected on your own tepidity, try to profit.

3. Consider the words of Magdalene with the two Angels, whom "she saw in white, sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had been laid. To whom when they asked, Woman, why weepest thou? she said, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him."[4] Ponder on each word, with the feelings hidden therein, excite yourself to a similar love towards our Lord Jesus, and reproach yourself for the want of it.

4. Consider the discourse of Magdalene with our Lord Jesus, to Whom, when He asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" she said, "thinking that it was the gardener, Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Here consider the goodness of our Lord Jesus, Who, by the use of a pious artifice, appearing under the form of a gardener, would comfort Magdalene in her search for Him. Thus He forsakes not those who seek Him from their hearts. In the second place, reflect upon the most ardent love of

[4] St. John xx. 12, 13.

Magdalene who, as though beside herself, impatient of delay seeks our Lord Jesus, though dead; prepared, wherever He might possibly be, even in the hands of His enemies, to take Him away. All which words, pondering in your heart and reflecting upon yourself, turn to your own profit.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the great happiness of Magdalene whom, in her anxious desire to find Him, Christ addressed by her own name, saying, "Mary!" The wicked have not this happiness, to whom, with respect to God, the 15th Psalm applies—"Nor will I be mindful of their names by My lips." Reflect how honourable it is to be named by God Himself, and with a sentiment of friendship. Rejoice with Magdalene at this happiness, desire it for yourself, and consider by what means you may obtain it.

2. Consider the answer of Magdalene to Christ, when He called her and revealed Himself to her. "She turning saith to Him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master." Here examine why she addressed Christ by no other name or title; again, in what sense she called Him her Master, and whether you can so call Him, who give no heed to His teaching and admonitions, and promise amendment.

3. Consider the affection of Magdalene in touching Christ, that is, in most humbly embracing Him out of reverence and love. Imagine what must have been her feelings, with what holy thoughts they were united, with what delight she embraced Christ. Do you also in an especial manner embrace Christ

glorified with similar sentiments, and in embracing Him make three acts—(1) Give thanks for the benefit of redemption, accomplished at this time; (2) beg many blessings for yourself and others; (3) offer to Christ Himself, and through Him to the Divine Persons, all the merits of His Sacred Humanity, that by them you may satisfy God for His benefits and the more easily obtain others.

4. Consider the words of Christ to Magdalene as she touched Him—"Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father." Wherein reflect upon what Christ meant by these words, why He said them, and endeavour to draw profit therefrom.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Regina Cœli.

1. Consider for what reasons the Virgin Mother of God is called Queen of Heaven; for the same reasons, namely, though in a more excellent degree, for which any person may be called a Queen. Gather here various instructions, whereby to excite in yourself the hope of her favour, the desire of serving her, with other pious sentiments, such as faithful servants entertain towards an earthly Queen.

2. Consider the titles which the Mother of God possesses to this holy dignity—whether those common to other Saints, whom God promised to make Kings in Heaven,[5] or those peculiar to herself, since she is the Mother of the King of Heaven, and worthy through her high sanctity of pre-eminence

[5] Apoc. v. 10.

in Heaven. Pondering over this, congratulate her on her great dignity, and rejoice that you have such a Queen, to whose service you are bound, and strive to be her faithful servant.

3. Consider in what manner the Mother of God displays her royal power in benefactions to the human race. Therefore give her thanks, and lay before her all your principal wants, that she may deign to relieve them, and bring forward reasons that may incline her most merciful Heart to you.

4. Consider by what mean you also may attain to the rank of a King in Heaven, and possess the royal dignity prepared by God for all His Elect. Having mourned over your manner of life, which does not conduce to this, endeavour to acquire those virtues which may lead you by the love of God to this pre-eminence.

LOW SUNDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons Christ, when He willed to show Himself to His disciples assembled together, appeared to them late, the doors being shut for fear of the Jews. You will find pious reasons in considering the properties peculiar to evening, and the good dispositions which fear produces in the human mind; from all which draw some spiritual lesson.

2. Consider for what reason Christ greeted His disciples with these words alone—"Peace be to you." Think how manifold a peace He brought to us; how manifold a peace He demands from us, and aim at peace in every way.

3. Consider the display of His Hands and Side after this declaration of peace; and here, again, examine why He showed them His Hands and His Side after declaring peace. Having pondered over this, imagine yourself present at this manifestation. Adore the Hands and the Side of the Christ, as the instruments of your redemption, as the sources of all your blessings; thank your Redeemer, kiss them, press them, embrace them with a most tender affection.

4. Consider how fitting it is that your hands and side, your breast even, should be conformed to the Hands and Side of Christ. Copy them, examine wherein you should imitate them, and conform yourself to so pure and holy a Model.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the joy of Christ's disciples when He appeared to them; consider of what kind it was, what was its cause, and what effects it left in their souls. Having reflected upon yourself, on whom God bestows a greater blessing in frequent Communion than He would by appearing to you, think what you should do and suffer in return for so great a benefit.

2. Consider these words, of Christ—"As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you."[1] Consider therein the manner and the end, in, and for which, the Eternal Father sent Christ into the world, and consider these words as said to yourself, that is, so far as your state allows, that you may understand

[1] St, John xx. 21.

what you have to do and to suffer in this world, by the example of Christ.

3. Consider the form used by Christ, of breathing on His disciples, as a sign of delivering to them the power which He soon after defined. Think why He used no other ceremony, such as imposition or elevation of the hands, benediction, or any other form, but breathed on them, which was an action of His most holy mouth and effort of His throat, a communication of His breath; and having pondered over and discovered the reason, endeavour to draw profit.

4. Consider the power given to the disciples after this act of breathing—"Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Think over the greatness of this benefit, and its necessity for your sins, so numerous and so frequent. Thank your Justifier from the depth of your heart; and see what it becomes you to do, to be grateful for such a benefit, not to abuse it, and that after your occasional falls into sin you may not be without this medicine of Christ, which He procured with so much labour and sorrow.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the pious artifice of Christ, Who, to give an occasion of merit to the two disciples going to Emmaus, when they drew near to the town, "made as if He would go farther," that so they might have an opportunity of inviting Him and practising hospitality. Thus our Lord omits no occasion of doing good to His loved ones, and sup-

plying them with matter of merit. Adore and love this goodness in your Lord, thank Him, excite yourself to the frequent performance of meritorious works, since your Lord takes such delight in them, and blame your negligence in losing so many occasions of merit.

2. Consider the means used by the disciples to draw Christ to them; they "constrained Him," says the Evangelist. Contemplate this constraint with the eyes of your mind, take delight in it; thank them in spirit who thus constrained Him, thus honoured Him; look at the way in which He yields to this constraint; learn to do holy violence to your Lord, and to constrain Him, that He may be with you and remain with you. Examine by what means you may be able thus to constrain Him.

3. Consider the words of the disciples in praying to Christ—"Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent." Meditate on these words according to the second method of prayer, address them to Christ, and apply them to the state of your present life.

4. Consider the readiness of Christ, Who yielded to the courtesy of His disciples and went in with them. Learn hence to yield to the good pleasure of others, and to submit your own will in things that are not evil. See if you do this, and if there be anything which needs correction, correct it.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the manner in which Christ our Lord, after His Resurrection, when about to give to His

two disciples His most holy Body under one kind, took bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to them. Contemplate in spirit this sacred spectacle, and endeavour to profit by it.

2. Consider the effect of this sacred banquet—"Their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." Here having reflected on yourself, see how you profit by the Holy Eucharist in the practical knowledge of your duty, and, detesting your blindness, beg of God a three-fold light, that you may practically see (1) that it is better to please God than men; (2) that the merits which procure eternal glory are to be sought with a greater desire than the comforts of this life; (3) that the sins and diseases of the soul are more to be shunned than those of the body.

3. Consider what Christ did after they knew Him —"He vanished out of their sight." Examine the reasons why He vanished, why He remained no longer to help them with His holy words, and gather some fruit from this example.

4. Consider the words spoken regarding Christ by His disciples after His departure. "They said one to the other, Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" Here consider whether your heart burns when you speak with Christ in prayer, or when He speaks to you in reading, or when you have Him within you in Communion, and having discovered the cause of your coldness, remove it.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider those words of Christ—"Amen, amen, I say unto you; the Son cannot do anything of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing: for what things soever He doth, these the Son also doth in like manner."[2] Meditating on these words with a tender affection, contemplate with the eyes of your mind all Christ's actions, or at least the principal ones; try to relish them spiritually, recognizing therein how they show forth the actions of His Father, benefiting His creatures in various and marvellous ways. Admire them, magnify them, give thanks for them, blame your ingratitude and abuse of them, and beg that He may always do in you His works, and those of His Father.

2. Consider how much and why it becomes you to conform yourself to Christ, as He conformed Himself to His Father. Inasmuch as Christ did whatever His Father did, so do you whatever Christ did, if it be possible to you by His help; and do at least those things which He did for the direct purpose of your imitation, as, for example, "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart;[3] "A new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another;"[4] "Be you therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect,"[5] with similar words and deeds of Christ. See whether you do this, and in what manner, and strive to do what is needful.

[2] St. John v. 19.
[3] St. Matt. xi. 29.
[4] St. John xiii. 34.
[5] St. Matt. v. 48.

3. Consider the love of the Eternal Father towards Christ, expressed by Christ in these words—"The Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things which Himself doth."[6] Oh, what a happiness to be so loved by God the Father, and to have Him for such a familiar friend and master as to show all that He doth! Burn with the desire of obtaining so great a love, and one so necessary for you; think by what means you may attain thereto, and make use of them.

4. Consider the power of Christ. "The Son giveth life to whom He will," namely, corporeal life, by calling back the dead, and spiritual life, taking away the spiritual death of the soul by the infusion of grace, giving vigour to the hitherto languid and tepid mind, and animating sluggish works with fervour. If you be of the number of these languid souls, beg life from God, and hinder it not by your hardness or by an increase of your sins.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider in these words of Christ—"Neither doth the Father judge any man, but hath given all judgment to the Son,"[7] for what reason the Eternal Father hath done so. Christ Himself gives one reason—"That all men may honour the Son as they honour the Father." Ponder upon this, as upon other considerations, especially this one, that the judgment of Christ is more seriously to be feared by the wicked, for whose sake the Son of God did more than the other Divine Persons, and endured

[6] St. John v. 20. [7] St. John v. 22.

more in His assumed Humanity. Therefore endeavour to have Him favourable to thee as Judge, and think what is necessary to this end.

2. Consider the evils which arise from not honouring Christ. He who honoureth not the Son, "honoureth not the Father Who hath sent Him." Here consider by what means Christ is dishonoured, which you will see in those ways whereby the honour of an illustrious personage is offended. Apply this to yourself, and see how it is with you; if there be anything amiss, deplore your defects, strive to amend, and think over those reasons which may excite you to honour your Lord.

3. Consider the happiness of the man who obeys the word of Christ—"He who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting, and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life."[8] Ponder over these words according to the second method of prayer, excite yourself to the perfect accomplishment of all the admonitions of Christ, and bewail all such actions as have been contrary thereto.

4. Consider the excellence of Christ—"As the Father hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself."[9] Congratulate Christ on this excellence, upon this equality with His Father. Rejoice that you are the servant of so excellent a Lord, and strive to imitate Him in this, that by His favour you may always have in you that spiritual life which is opposed to sin, and to the sluggishness of tepid works.

[8] St. John v. 24. [9] St. John v. 26.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Lætare.

1. Consider the first cause of joy in the Mother of God—namely, that she was never stained by any sin. Think how rare, how excellent, how useful a gift was this; rejoice with her, and strive to imitate her as far as possible in her freedom from sin.

2. Consider the second cause of joy in the Mother of God—that she remained an ever Immaculate Virgin, bound by an express vow of virginity. Weigh well the excellence of this favour; thank God that you also have been made, in your measure, a sharer in this favour; beg for perseverance in this state; examine what is your conduct therein, and think how you may put away everything contrary thereto.

3. Consider the third cause of joy in the Mother of God, in the fact of being the Mother of God Himself. Think how great a thing this was, how beneficial to herself and to others; and earnestly beg her to show herself to you in a manner suitable to the Mother of God Himself, by delivering you, and defending you from various evils, as well as by enriching you with many good gifts.

4. Consider the fourth cause of joy in the most Blessed Virgin—namely, that she was filled with the gifts of grace. Contemplate and inwardly masticate this plentitude. Admire, congratulate her; aim at this plentitude, according to your measure; beg it from God, try to possess it, and put away all impediments.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1. Consider in Christ the first quality of a good shepherd, which is to be perpetually with his flock as it wanders over fields and mountains. This Christ does, Who as God is always and everywhere present, and sees all things. Thank your Shepherd; walk cautiously, lest you offend in His eyes; and see whether you behave in His presence, as you behave in the presence of one whom you reverence or fear.

2. Consider in Christ the second quality of a good shepherd, which is to feed the sheep in good pastures. This Christ our Lord does, Who feeds us with corporeal and spiritual food—namely, with His Word, with His interior inspirations, with the outward admonitions of our Superiors, with the Sacraments, and in them with His own Body and Blood. Give thanks for this rich and wholesome food, and endeavour to show your gratitude by your deeds.

3. Consider in Christ the third quality of a good shepherd, which is to defend his flock. This Christ our Lord does, Who defends you from the temptations of Satan, from the injuries of men, from your own sins, wherein you would perish, if He prevented it not. Praise His mercy, beg Him always to defend you, and see that you throw not yourself into these evils.

4. Consider in Christ the fourth quality of a good shepherd, which is to carry the infirm and weak sheep, and to cure their diseases. Oh, with how much affection Christ our Lord does this! Admire His patience, His mercy, His love; and thank Him

especially that in the most Blessed Eucharist, which you are about to receive, He has given a most efficacious medicine for the remedy of your diseases; and, if they are not cured, blame yourself, and not the Shepherd, and take heed to profit by the medicine in future.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the greatness of the love of Christ towards His sheep; He gave His life for them, which no other shepherd has done for his sheep. Ponder on this charity; think how great it is, even if the life of Christ were not of more value than that of an ordinary man. Admire the love of Christ, praise it; and think what it becomes you to do and to suffer for so kind a Shepherd, that you may respond to His love.

2. Consider the excellence of the life and Soul of this Shepherd, which He gave for you and His other sheep. Compare these with all that you might give to your Lord, and which you will not offer to Him when He demands it of you. Acknowledge how little it is that God requires of you; be ashamed of your stinginess, and try to amend.

3. Consider how little fruit there is of so many labours undertaken by the Shepherd for His sheep. How many heathens, heretics, bad Catholics, perish! How few profit as they should do by the salutary pastures whereon they are brought up! Yet He is silent, He endures, He waits for amendment. Considering all this, admire His goodness, make not a bad use of this His pasture, lest He make amends

for the long delay of punishment by severity, and expel you from His Fold, as He has expelled many who perchance were better than you.

4. Consider how precious to you should be the souls for whom Christ gave His life, since Christ valued them more than His life. Examine whether you so esteem the souls of your neighbours and brethren, and whether you show this esteem by word and deed; and correct what needs correction.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the first means whereby Christ knows His sheep, of whom He says—"I know Mine."[1] He knows them, namely, by their outward stature and colour. Examine your exterior actions and dispositions; see if they be such as become one of Christ's sheep; and correct what is amiss.

2. Consider the second means whereby Christ knows His sheep, namely, by the voice. Examine whether thy words be truly such as ought to proceed from Christ's sheep, as regards their aim, their substance, the time when spoken, the company, the gestures, the vehemence of tone; and strive to make them such.

3. Consider the third means whereby Christ knows His good sheep, and whereby they are declared to be good sheep, namely, by their abiding in that place or field wherein He wills them to abide and to feed. See how it is with yourself, whether you are thus resigned regarding all places and offices wherein

[1] St. John x. 14.

Christ wills you to remain. Consider what is necessary to attain to this, and endeavour to be such.

4. Consider the fourth means whereby Christ knows His sheep, namely, obedience if they hear His voice. The voice of Christ is two-fold, precept and counsel, uttered internally and externally, by Himself or His ministers. Examine how you hear it; mourn if you hear it not; and in future listen to it.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the resurrection of the good, of whom Christ our Judge said—"They that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life."[2] Desire this resurrection; see whether you deserve it; take care to be worthy of it; see what things are needful thereto, and endeavour to acquire them.

2. Consider the resurrection of the wicked—"But they that have done evil shall come forth unto the resurrection of judgment." Tremble lest you be of this number, for you are uncertain whether you have not committed sins deserving of such punishment, and uncertain whether they have been forgiven. Take heed therefore to your affairs, that you may destroy your sins by a worthy penance, may return to them no more, and may please your Judge.

3. Consider why the resurrection of the wicked is called by Christ a resurrection, not of punishment, but of judgment, which precedes punishment. These may be some of the reasons. First, that the torment of hell, in nowise diminished by its duration, will

[2] St. John v. 29.

be as new and as keen as though it were not yet joined to its whole punishment and sense of pain, but brought along with it something fresh, so that the sentence of the Judge in condemning the sinner conveys some continued increase of punishment. Second, because the man who knows the excellence of God should have a greater sense of the Divine judgment than of the punishment following thereon, for in judgment God is in some manner afflicted and grieved by sinners, and those who love God should guard against this, lest they be to Him the cause of sorrow. Think over this, and endeavour to profit.

4. Consider what they who have come under the judgment of God, and know themselves to have committed crimes worthy of hell, would do and suffer to efface them. See what you should also do and suffer, so that having imitated sinners, you should imitate those who are penitent.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the humility of Christ in these words —"I cannot of Myself do anything."[8] See how much better these words would suit you, often erring, often sinning, often omitting what you should do. Therefore invoke His help, that as much good as possible may be done in you and by you. Resist Him not when He wills to work in you, and remove all obstacles which hinder God from doing such works in you as He does in His beloved ones, according to what you have both seen and read.

[8] St. John v. 30.

2. Consider how carefully you should live, since Christ says—"As I hear, so I judge." He hears all your words as well as your deeds, for these also have their voice, and cry to God as the blood of Abel cried from the earth, according to the Scripture. Take heed, therefore, that Christ hear nothing from you that deserves a severe judgment; if there be any such thing, see that it be quickly put away, lest He condemn it. Examine your conduct in this matter, and look well to yourself.

3. Consider what is the judgment of Christ—"My judgment is just." And He gives the reason—"Because I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Oh, how necessary it is for one living in Community to judge justly: which they do not, who seek themselves and their own advantage, and act without reflection. See what is your behaviour in judging the words, deeds, and talents of others, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider how, in order to please God, you should strive to be so good as to compel others, willingly or unwillingly, to speak well of you. Such was Christ, Who said—"There is another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true."[4] See whether you are such, and examine how many things there are in you which others, if questioned, might justly blame. In order then to be agreeable to God, endeavour, for His most pure glory, to be such that the eyes of men may find nothing in you deserving of blame.

[4] St. John v. 32.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the courage of St. John, who, knowing the ill-will of the Jews towards Christ, nevertheless bore witness to the truth in praise of Christ, fearless of human respect. Thank him, and congratulate Christ in having so good a panegyrist of His greatness; and bewail your tepidity and scanty love of Christ, in so often saying and doing what you should not, and omitting to say and do what you should; and all through human respect.

2. Consider that you should be content with the testimony of God alone, and without despising that of men, should not seek after it with ambition. "I," says Christ, "receive not testimony from men;" [5] that is to say, I receive not such as can give Me inward peace. See how much more eagerly, diligently, and constantly you seek the testimony and approbation of men than those of God; and how much more you grieve over the evil opinion and words of men than over the sins which you know will certainly have made God think ill of you. Blush; think how unworthy this is; and amend.

3. Consider the end of all Christ's words, declared thus—"I say these things that you may be saved." This ought to be the end of our words, who are called to procure our own salvation and that of others. Let us see whether we seek and aim at this in our words, and endeavour to derive profit.

4. Consider the praise bestowed by Christ on St. John the Baptist—"He was a burning and a

[5] St. John v. 34.

shining light."[6] Such should be the servant of God; burning in himself with the fervour of charity; kindling and lighting it up in others. Consider how St. John did this; examine how you do the same; endeavour to conform to his example, and bewail all your defects in this respect.

SATURDAY.

Alleluia.

1. Consider that the Hebrew word *Alleluia* signifies *Praise God*, with joy, with gladness, and with intensity. God deserves our praise from all the motives that call justly for praise, such as the excellences of His Person, both natural and supernatural. These excellences indeed are manifold, and as it were intrinsically infinite, as, for example, His Infinity, Eternity, Immensity, Independence, Wisdom, Goodness, Purity, Omnipotence, &c. Thinking over and examining into the best known perfections of God, praise Him in each and for each, praying Him to leave in you effects proportioned to each of His perfections, for the greater glory of His Name.

2. Consider other motives of Divine praise in His multiplied benefits towards us, which you shall think over as before, adding thanksgivings for each from the gladness and joy of your heart.

3. Consider for what reasons the praise of God should proceed from you with joy and gladness. It is because God loves a cheerful giver, and because

[6] St. John v. 35.

there are more and greater causes of joy in praising God than in any human affairs. Therefore, having roused in yourself sentiments of gladness, say joyfully and gladly, *Te Deum laudamus*, according to the third method of prayer.

4. Consider that the Hebrew word *Alleluia* is composed of *Allelu*, that is, *praise*, and of the Name of God, *Jah*, which the Hebrews deduce from being, or fearing, for the reason that in God is contained the highest power of being and of giving being to others, and that He is to be feared before all. Whence it justly follows that the praise of God, expressed in the word *Alleluia*, should be intense, because it is directed towards a Being infinite in His Essence and a Majesty worthy of infinite filial love and reverence. Wherefore excite in yourself an intense zeal for Divine praise, that the praises from your mouth may be as it were proportioned to their infinite object, and that you may say with the Psalmist, more by your deeds than your words, "Let my heart rejoice, that I may fear Thy Name." [7]

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1. Consider the state of this present life, so mixed with good and evil, which Christ has depicted in these words—"A little while, and now you shall not see Me: and again a little while, and you shall see Me." [1] Therefore, when you are sad, wait for the consolation of God; and when you have it, prepare yourself for the cross, of which, lest it trouble you

[7] Psalm lxxxv. 11. [1] St. John xvi. 16.

too much, you must cherish a desire; and examine also into the reasons for which you should ask it and bear it.

2. Consider the sentiments of the disciples on hearing Christ's words — "I go to the Father." Excite in yourself similar sentiments, and dispose yourself by frequently recalling them to celebrate Christ's Ascension with pious affection.

3. Consider the special duty of a Religious in this world, declared by these words of Christ—"Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful."[2] See whether your life be a life of tears, that is, a life of privation as regards food, conveniences, &c., a life of labour and toil, or rather, if it be the contrary; and having recognized the obligation of your state, which calls you to an imitation of the Cross of Christ, see what you have to do.

4. Consider the reward of a good Religious living austerely in this world—"Your sorrow shall be turned into joy," that is both in this life, because it gives a good conscience, and in the other, because it brings us to the clear vision of God, our Supreme Good. Examine therefore whether, by your manner of life, you are deserving of this two-fold joy, and if there be any obstacle, strive to remove it.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the first cause of the joy promised us by Christ in these words—"Your heart shall rejoice,"[3] should be found in the true knowledge of

[2] St. John xvi. 20. [3] St. John xvi. 22.

God implanted in us by a supernatural faith, without which, as the Apostle says, "it is impossible to please God,"[4] and which is the "foundation of justification," as the Council of Trent calls it. Acknowledge the greatness of this benefit, considering how many are without it, and how difficult it is to obtain it; thank God for it; ask it for those who are in error; and as far as lies in your power, help others to obtain it.

2. Consider that the second cause of your joy should be found in being either entirely free from mortal sin, or in being, at least at this present time, delivered from it by the help of God. Ponder upon the greatness of this blessing, and upon your happiness; give thanks, draw others to it by your example, strive to keep yourself therein, and seek those things which are needful for perseverance.

3. Consider that the third cause of joy should be that you are taken out of the world into the service of God. Think over your abundant happiness in this state, and draw holy sentiments, as before, from the depth of your heart.

4. Consider that the fourth cause of your joy should be the peace of a good conscience, in which every Religious should abound, and which springs from a fervent life and the observance of all our rules. See whether your life be such, and having observed your principal defects, try to avoid them.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the great multitude of sick persons who lay round the pond called Probatica at Jerusa-

[4] Heb. xi. 6.

lem, "waiting for the moving of the water."[5] Remark their ardent desire to be cured; see whether there be in you an equal desire of obtaining a yet better cure—namely, the cure of the four diseases of the soul. Be ashamed of not begging for it earnestly, and strive to excite in yourself a desire thereof.

2. Consider the four-fold kind of sick persons mentioned by the Evangelist as lying round this pond—sick, blind, lame, withered; which qualities may be applied to all the diseases of spiritual persons. They are sick, who perform their works languidly or coldly, without the spirit of fervour. They are blind, who so live that they appear by their actions not to see that it is better to offend men than God, that the rewards of eternal glory are more to be sought after than earthly comforts, that progress in virtue and in the grace of God is more diligently to be aimed at than progress in learning. They are lame, who, while they profess to serve God, let their affections stoop towards earthly things, seeking in Religion for comforts, vain praises, honours, and such things as are proper only to the world, and should have been abandoned with the world. They are withered, who have lost the life of grace by a passionate attachment to any mortal sin. See whether you be such a one, and take heed not to be such.

3. Consider the remedy whereby God healed those who were lying by the pond, namely, by "the moving of the water;" which water could not certainly cure them of itself, but did so when moved by Divine power. Here admire both the love and power of God, Who worked miracles by so simple a thing as

[5] St. John v. 3.

water; and then without any great difficulties, by merely moving the water. So He does to you and to others by the Sacraments, which are administered with elements easily procured. Praise then His mercy, and show yourself grateful by seeking the effects of the Sacraments with piety, diligence, and fruitfulness; persevering and growing by the careful reception thereof.

4. Consider the minister of these benefits of God, namely, the Angel of the Lord, who went down into the pond and moved the water. Thus God will not bestow on us His gifts of Himself alone, without the ministry of creatures; that thus He may honour His creatures by using their services in giving them the power to benefit us, and that He may bring about a mutual love among them, especially towards the holy Angels, whom above all He uses to promote the affair of our salvation. Thank your Benefactor for such noble ministers; thank them also for deigning to help you, a poor mean creature. See what is your behaviour towards them, how far you obey them; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider that the time when the Angel went down to move the water in the pool called Probatica, was uncertain, and known to no man; for he went down when God thought proper to send the Angel for the healing of some person; for if the water were always to heal at a certain time, the cure might be ascribed to the water and not to God.

Thus God does to us in the benefits of His grace: He gives when He wills, not when we will or ask; therefore let us move the Heart of God by prayers and a good life, that He may often give us His gifts, at least when we are in most need of His help. See if you are aiming at this, and strive to aim thereat in future, and to dispose yourself for Divine blessings.

2. Consider for what reasons the Angel who moved the water is called the "Angel of the Lord," and having applied them to yourself, gather some spiritual fruit.

3. Consider the humility, so to speak, of the Angel, who, although surpassing human nature with respect to natural excellence, yet disdained not, at the command of God, to move the common element of water, touched by so many unclean and ulcerated sick. Learn hence to love mean duties and to go into mean places for your Lord, when God demands it by His ministers; think over the causes which should urge you thereto; see how you have acted hitherto, and how you should act for the future.

4. Consider for what reason he only was cured of his infirmity who went down first into the pond after the moving of the water. Thus God has taught us the great value of diligence, for the reception of those gifts which are given us by God freely, and without any merit of ours. See whether you show this diligence: if not, blame yourself, beg pardon, and try to show it for the future.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the excellence of the pond of Probatica; its water being moved by the Angel, the first who touched it was made whole of any infirmity whatsoever. Oh, of how much value now were such a pond, if it existed anywhere! But Christ has dug out for you a better pond, and not one alone but many, in the numerous Sacraments, by which all your diseases may be cured whenever you will, even if you be not the first, but the last, to approach them. Think over the liberality of God, pouring itself out most copiously in the streams of the Sacraments, admire and praise His goodness, examine how far you make use thereof, and with what fruit, and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the long duration of the disease with which the paralytic, lying by the pond, had been afflicted for thirty-eight years, and from which he would have delivered himself had it been in his power. Think over in bitterness of soul the long duration of your spiritual diseases, from which, if you had the will, you could be free, since they depend on your will, which sins not unless it chooses. Blush, and amend.

3. Consider the tenderness of the mercy of Christ, Who, having seen the paralytic man, and heard of the long duration of his disease, unasked and willingly offers Himself to cure him, and says to him—"Wilt thou be made whole?" Thank this most merciful Physician for so great a charity; beg that He may help thee, a suppliant, since He succoured him

who asked not. See whether there be in you the same sentiments of charity to help those who may benefit by your works; and what you would have done for yourself, try to do for others.

4. Consider for what reason Christ would not heal the sick man until He had first asked him, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He knew that he wished it, yet He would draw out an act of his will. Thus God demands from us both our consent and our ardent desire of His gifts as a beginning of His mercies. Accustom your heart, therefore, to burn with ardent desire, and prepare your soul for the gifts of God.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider how the perils and evils of one who trusts in himself, heedless of the admonitions of others, are shown forth in the sick man, who, lying down by the pond, said, "Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond." See if it be so with you, and try to correct those things which you have either, done or left undone out of your own judgment, contrary to the advice of your Superiors.

2. Consider that lukewarm Religious are surpassed by many seculars in devotion, mortification of the flesh, modesty, obedience, reverence towards Superiors, patience in adversity, and other virtues, so that any lukewarm Religious may justly use these words of the sick man, who was unable to go down into the water moved by the Angel—"Whilst I am coming another goeth down before me." Consider how dis-

graceful this is, how poor a correspondence with grace, and take heed that it be not so with you.

3. Consider the mystical means of recovering spiritual health, expressed by Christ in these words —"Arise, take up thy bed and walk." (1.) It is needful to depart from that place or thing wherein the sick man lay, that is, the fault must be abandoned; (2) it is necessary to carry the weight of his bed, that is, the burdens of Religion and the spiritual life, and to bear with adversity as the penalty of sin; (3) it is necessary to go up to higher things, that is, to walk, and because you do not do this, therefore you make no progress. Do it then, that so you may advance.

4. Consider for what reason the diseases of the body are more often and more quickly cured than the diseases of the soul, and, having discovered them, endeavour to derive profit.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Quem Meruisti Portare.

1. Consider the first manner in which Mary merited to bear Christ, for she desired Christ indeed, by Whose grace she is preserved from all sin and filled with every good gift. In this sense the Church, in the blessing of the wax, says these words, yet not so abundantly verified—"O happy fault, which deserved to have such and so great a Redeemer." These words suit you well, who are more liable to sin than many others, and whom it behoves to obtain deliverance therefrom. Give thanks to your De-

liverer. See that you abuse not this frequent deliverance by so frequent a return and relapse into sins that have been forgiven.

2. Consider the second manner whereby Mary merited to bear Christ. She had no impediment of sin, which alone God perfectly abhors, and which, if it be mortal, expels Him from the soul. Congratulate your Mother upon this purity, bewail your own sinfulness, and see how you may best become pure in the eyes of God, so as to be fit for His graces.

3. Consider the third manner whereby Mary merited to bear Christ, namely, as the theologians say, she merited by congruity to conceive the Humanity of Christ, predestined to a union with the Word; as Abraham merited that the Messiah should be born of his race, and David that the advent of Christ in the flesh should be hastened. Here consider what were the ardent wishes of Mary for the Incarnation of Christ, with what burning prayers she asked for it, and yet the Incarnation of Christ in her womb was not as necessary to her as your salvation and perfection are to you. Why, then, do you ask and seek for them so negligently and coldly? Be ashamed, and burn with the desire of acquiring them speedily.

4. Consider the fourth manner whereby Mary merited to bear Christ. She kept her body and soul most pure, and this it is which attracts God to abide willingly in the soul. Here contemplate with the eyes of your mind the soul and body of the Mother of God, adorned with His great gifts. Taste the sweetness of these graces, smell the sweet odour thereof, hear the soft harmony of the soul united in will with the body, singing by its most holy acts a

sweet song to God. Rouse yourself to imitate her, be ashamed of the dissimilarity of your life, and pray God that, by the prayers of His Mother, you may deserve to bear Him, joyfully dwelling within you.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1. Consider the end to which we should tend in all our works, shown in these words of Christ—"I go to Him that sent Me."[1] For such should be our works that by them we may truly go to God; drawing near to Him by the increase of merits and the growth of spiritual progress. See if you go in this manner to God, and if not, why not; try to advance; bewail your slowness in advancing, or may be your swiftness in falling back.

2. Consider the affection wherewith Christ panted after His Father, and on the other hand see how far you desire to draw closer to Him and to reach Him in His Kingdom. Think with shame that you are longing more ardently for paltry things, things hurtful to you and hateful to God, than to see Him and His Kingdom. Strive and amend.

3. Consider the spirit of Christ's disciples, removed from idle curiosity, who, hearing Him speak of His departure, asked Him not, "Whither goest Thou?" although indeed the question would not have been useless. Compare with this spirit your own great curiosity; think of its dangers, and avoid them.

4. Consider with what sentiments you should go to receive the most Holy Eucharist, on these

[1] St. John xvi. 5.

accounts: as a criminal to your Judge, as a beggar to a rich man, as one sick to your Physician, as one afflicted to your Consoler, as one weak to your Helper, as a client to your Benefactor, as a servant to your Lord, as a friend to your Friend, as a son to your Father. Having bewailed the poverty of your affection, try to excite it.

MONDAY.

1. Consider how blind we are: harassed sometimes by scruples in things that are harmless, and untroubled about the avoidance of things really evil, like the Jews, who said to the man that was healed, "It is the Sabbath, it is not lawful for thee to take up thy bed,"[2] and yet made no scruple of persecuting the innocent Jesus on account of the sick man healed on the Sabbath Day. See whether or no your conduct be similar, and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the courage of the sick man healed by Christ, who, despising the scruples suggested by the Jews, preferred to obey Christ, saying—"He that made me whole, He said to me, Take up thy bed and walk." Thus should you answer, if not in words, at least in deeds, when any one would draw you away by counsel or example from doing what is right. See whether you do this, and endeavour to do it.

3. Consider the obedience of the sick man healed by Christ, who, when asked by the Jews who had cured him, "knew not who it was," yet obeyed His

[2] St. John v. 10.

word, rose up at His command, and had confidence in his cure. Oh, how great will be your confusion, who have known so well the excellence and the nature of Christ, and yet obey not His admonitions. Think over this, and consider what you have to do.

4. Consider the humility of Christ, Who, having healed the sick man at the pond of Probatica, went aside from the multitude standing in the place. For on this account He could not be known by the man whom He had healed. Learn hence to fly the applause of men, not to seek those places and occupations wherein much praise is to be gained; not to shun places and occupations removed from the company of men: and reflect practically on what you should do in this respect, if you will be a true imitator of Christ, and will prove by this very thing that you have left the world, not merely by a change of place, but from your heart.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the gratitude of the man healed by Christ, who, having carried the bed to his house, went to the Temple, intending no doubt to give thanks to God for his recovered health. By his example learn to go oftentimes a day to the church, or if your occupations do not permit this, at least in imitation of Daniel the Prophet turn your face towards the temple, and send forth ardent prayers to God.

2. Consider how you should behave in the temple, namely, as though you did perceive Christ present; because, indeed, both as God and as Man He is

present in His own way, and looks at you. Examine your exterior and interior acts, your gestures, laughter, levity and irreverence; and learn how unworthy they are even of a heathen, by the example of those seculars who stand in the presence of their lords. Having bewailed your faults in this respect, avoid them.

3. Consider that you have to guard against a relapse into sins that have been forgiven; and think that Christ says to you what He said to the man whom He had healed—"Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." To avoid this effectually, think how you may shun those things which prepare the way for a return to past sins.

4. Consider the malice of the Jews, who began to persecute Jesus because He healed on the Sabbath Day. Those imitate the Jews who entertain an evil mind, who mock, shun, and cavil at others, whom they see performing acts of mortification, contempt of honour, piety, and the strict discipline of a regular life. This is a mischievous class of men, unworthy to be servants of God. Take heed that you be not of their number. And if perchance you find something of this nature imperceptibly growing in you, try to destroy it as soon as possible.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the answer of Christ to the Jews who persecuted Him on account of the man healed on the Sabbath Day. "My Father worketh until now; and I work." He reproaches not His unjust

persecutors, He blames not their actions, He threatens not, punishes not, as they justly deserved. See whether your behavour is such, when you have anything to suffer that is even justly merited; and try to conform yourself to Christ.

2. Consider what your Heavenly Father and His Son your Lord work, and how They work in all creatures, especially in rational creatures, and especially in you. Think over the works of nature and of grace; how God is present, how He concurs with your every inclination and motion of your will, with all your members, senses, powers, and with all their acts. Admire His goodness, praise Him, beg Him to be ever present; and try to make all your actions so holy that God may not blush, speaking after our manner, to give His concurrence and presence.

3. Consider the aggravated malice of the Jews, who, having received this answer from Christ, sought all the more to put Him to death. Compassionate Christ your Lord, suffering these things for your sake. Call to mind all your own afflictions, and you will find them less grievous than this persecution of Christ. If, therefore, your Lord and Captain, though innocent, bears these grievous things with a joyful mind, why should the punishment of your sins, conscious as you are of so many seem to you so hard?

4. Consider a new reason for their still greater persecution of Christ, namely, because "He said God was His Father, making Himself equal to God."[3] Thus what should have been a reason for loving Christ, is turned by these wretches into a

[3] St. John v. 18.

reason for hating Him. Oh, how often we rise up against the very words and benefits of others! How often we turn medicine into poison! Examine yourself, and amend. Rejoice, on the other hand, that Christ our Lord, your Redeemer, your Food, and your Master is equal to the Father, and therefore can bestow on you of Himself all gifts of grace and glory, if you be deserving thereof.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the happiness of Christ's disciples, to whom He said—"I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you, for the Father Himself loveth you."[4] Compare with this love, that of a lord towards his servants, of a father towards his son, of a king towards his courtiers, &c., they are not equal to this love of God; and yet how much men desire that kind of love, and care not so much to be loved by God. See how it is with you, and what it is needful for you to do.

2. Consider for what reason the disciples were so loved by the Father as not to need the prayers of Christ—"Because you have loved Me." Think in what manner they loved Christ and excite yourself to a similar, yea, a still greater love of Him.

3. Consider what Christ did and suffered for your sake, after that saying of His was fulfilled—"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world."[5] You who have left the world for the service of God, do you do and suffer as much for God's sake as He Who, for your sake came from His Father into the

[4] St. John xvi. 26, 27. [5] St. John xvi. 28.

world? Answer this to God Who asks you; be ashamed, satisfy Him, and amend.

4. Consider what should be the special and continual occupation of a good Religious, as expressed in these words—"I leave the world and I go to the Father."[6] For in all our works we should show that we seek not the world, that we perform them not after a worldly manner, but tend purely to God through them. Examine therefore your works, at least the most important; see whether they be such, and if not, endeavour to make them such.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider what it is to leave the world, as we are all bound to do. It is, namely, to leave those things which worldlings seek, as honours, pleasures, riches, and to seek things contrary hereto. Again, it is to leave the imperfect manner, whereby worldlings perform works relating to the worship of God, and the good of their neighbours. In the third place, it is to leave the worldly, frivolous, unheavenly end which worldlings set before them in their works. See whether you leave the world in this manner, and if their be anything wanting, endeavour to obtain it.

2. Consider the first motive for leaving the world, namely, the sins it has occasioned you when living therein to commit: for sin is the greatest of all evils, and sin is the cause of the punishment of the damned. Shun therefore all inordinate affection for worldly things, with which you have so often been

[6] St. John xvi. 28.

ensnared; shun also excessive and incautious conversation.

3. Consider the second motive for leaving the world, namely, the goods of the heavenly world, which God prepares and offers, yea, gives, even in this life, to those who for His love use this world as though they used it not, in food, dress, labours, misfortunes, prosperity, and adversity. Ponder and examine these gifts, of which the histories of the Saints are full, and having thought upon their excellence, and especially on the will and pleasure of God, Who is gratified by such a life, excite yourself to hate the world instead of seeking it.

4. Consider the third motive for leaving the world, namely, the example of Christ and His servants, who sought Heaven in no other way. Examine here how contrary to the world was the life of Christ and of His servants, and conform yourself to their model.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Quem Meruisti Portare.

1. Consider the first manner whereby the most holy Virgin bore Christ, namely, as a mother she bore her Son in her womb, born according to the flesh of her most pure blood. In this manner no other creature ever bore Christ. Congratulate her, and try to imitate her, by giving to Christ in Religion your abundant and assiduous sweat and toil; depriving yourself for His sake, as far as your Superiors will permit, of some portions of your food and drink,

which without this self-privation would be converted into your blood.

2. Consider the second manner whereby the most holy Virgin bore Christ, namely, as God, indwelling by grace in her soul. In this manner also, no mere creature ever bore Christ, because none ever had so much grace. Congratulate the Blessed Virgin, and endeavour to imitate her, by accumulating the gifts of grace, and bringing forth continually meritorious works. See whether and in what manner you do so, and try to make progress.

3. Consider the third manner whereby the most holy Virgin bore Christ, namely, as her food, receiving Him likewise in the most Blessed Eucharist. No Saint received the Holy Eucharist so perfectly. See how you receive Him. Mourn, if there be anything to mourn over, and try to resemble as much as possible His most holy Mother in receiving the Blessed Eucharist, with most ardent charity, intense devotion, and profound reverence.

4. Consider the fourth manner whereby the most holy Virgin bore Christ, namely, she took on herself many burdens of the Cross, for, as St. Anselm says, she suffered more than the Martyrs have suffered, by the anguish of her soul on account of the death of Christ and the thought of our sins. Examine how you bear Christ, or rather how you bear Him not, but cast Him away when He wishes to lay His Cross upon you. Accustom yourself to bear Him, having considered the motives for desiring to bear Him.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

1. Consider the happiness arising from this promise of Christ—"Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My Name, He will give it to you."[1] See how necessary is this grace to you, a beggar, infirm, afflicted, conscious of many sins; rejoice, give thanks, and consider practically whether God be worthy that you should give Him those things which He asks of you, in return for His promise to give you all things for which you pray aright.

2. Consider what God asks of you in the Scripture, in your rules, by your Superiors and confessors, by spiritual books, good companions, and your own conscience. Why do you not give to God what He asks? Blush, and amend.

3. Consider how bad your prayer has hitherto been—"Hitherto you have not asked anything in My Name." And this not so much in regard to the matter of your petitions, which may always have been good, but in regard to your posture, manner, and other circumstances. Observe how unbecoming and offensive this is, considering the infinite Majesty of God, Who is present, and sees you praying in a manner which you would not dare to use in asking bread of a peasant, if you were in great need thereof.

4. Consider how suitable a means is the Blessed Eucharist for giving you all that you ask, and think that Christ says these words to you—"Ask, and

[1] St. John xvi. 23.

you shall receive, that your joy may be full." Think over these things, and resolve to make good use of so efficacious a means of grace.

MONDAY.

1. Consider and apply to yourself these words of Christ—"I have many things to say to you."[2] Take counsel, namely, with your conscience as to what Christ demands of you, what He desires to see, or not to see, in you; and submit yourself seriously to the interior admonitions of Christ in cutting off what is evil, and in planting those virtues which He requires of you.

2. Consider your culpable weakness in not bearing those things which you did bear before—"You cannot bear them now." How much more numerous and more severe trials you did formerly bear, although then more innocent, than you are willing now to bear for Christ, when His greater benefits, greater helps, greater light, the remission of greater sins, or at least of more numerous sins, demand of you a greater fortitude! See, therefore, what is the cause of this voluntary weakness, and return at least to your former fortitude, if you will not aim at a higher degree thereof.

3. Consider for what reasons the Holy Spirit promised by Christ is called the "Spirit of truth."[3] You will find them in considering the origin of this Spirit, whence He proceeds, to what end He tends, the manner whereby He enters souls, and the effects which He works. Compare with all these your

[2] St. John xvi. 12. [3] St. John xvi. 13.

created spirit, and see whether it deserves to be called in some degree a true, not a carnal spirit—a spirit of truth.

4. Consider the manner whereby the Holy Spirit teaches all necessary truth to the Church. He does not teach all things immediately of Himself, but by the Scriptures, by various Superiors, good examples, rewards and punishments, many benefits, and interior remorse. See whether you receive these doctrines heart and soul; and show yourself His true disciple.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the first action of the Holy Spirit foretold by Christ—"He will convince the world of sin."[4] Think what ample matter the Holy Spirit has for convincing the world of sin, in every state of life, and in yourself. Draw from yourself, therefore, various sentiments of humiliation, grief, supplication, with promises of amendment.

2. Consider the cause of so many sins—"Of sin, because they believed not in Me." For in heretics, heathens, and Jews, infidelity is the foundation of sin, in bad Catholics it is a lively want of faith; for by their deeds they make it appear as though Christ did not behold or judge sin, as though He did not pursue it with a supreme hatred, or had not died to destroy it. See whether there be in you such a lively faith as there ought to be, and strive to obtain it.

3. Consider the second office of the Holy Spirit—"He will convince the world of justice," because,

[4] St. John xvi. 8.

namely, it is so scanty, and because the works which appear just to many, are sinful, and stained with guilt. Look through your principal works, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider the third office of the Holy Ghost—"He will convince the world of judgment," that is, as St. Bernard explains, because it perversely usurps judgment, by rashly judging both itself and others. See whether this can be applied to you, and correct what needs correction.

VIGIL OF THE ASCENSION.

1. Consider for what reasons sorrow filled the hearts of the disciples when they heard Christ say, "I go to Him that sent Me; and none of you ask Me, Whither goest Thou?"[5] Meditate on each of these reasons, and apply them to your advancement.

2. Consider for what reasons the departure of Christ from the world was profitable to His disciples, whence He said to them, "It is expedient to you that I go."[6] You will discover these reasons the more easily by considering and applying to the present case the advantage which is usually procured by the departure of a father from his sons, of a merchant from his family, of a king from his kingdom, of a general from his army, of a husband from his wife, of a friend from his friend; or, on the other hand, by their return to their country and their home.

3. Consider the chief fruit of the Ascension of

[5] St. John xvi. 5. [6] St. John xvi. 7.

Christ—"If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." Having considered the excellence of this Paraclete, and the gifts which He can and does procure, excite in yourself a desire to receive Him; think over the means thereto, and prepare yourself for Him.

4. Consider what you have to commend to Christ ascending for the morrow, whether for your own needs or those of others, and what messages to give Him. Having impressed them on your memory, offer and commend them to your Guardian Angel, that he in the mean time may present them to the Eternal Father and obtain well and quickly what you desire.

ASCENSION DAY.

1. Consider how Christ, previous to His Ascension, instructed His disciples as to their abode. He ordered them to remain in a certain place at Jerusalem, to await the arrival of the Holy Spirit, teaching us thereby how greatly men are disposed for the reception of heavenly gifts by solitude and the avoiding of unnecessary distractions. Observe this in the retirement of Moses before receiving the Law, and frequently after its reception, as well as in many of the Saints of the Old and New Testament, and learn hence what you have to do.

2. Consider the reproof given by Christ to His disciples before His Ascension—"He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart."[7]

[7] St. Mark xvi. 14.

Hence, in the first place, learn that true joy of spirit should not be diminished by those reproofs which nature dislikes; in the second place, apply Christ's reproofs to yourself for the same reasons, though the matter may be different, and amend.

3. Consider the commission to preach given by Christ to His disciples—"Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned."[8] Thank God for His two-fold benefit; first, that you are one of those who are baptized and have believed; second, that you are called to the Apostolic vocation of bestowing these benefits on others, and beg Him to make you a fitting instrument and one dear to Him for this purpose.

4. Consider in what manner Christ ascended, and how He was received in Heaven by His Eternal Father—"A cloud received Him out of their sight."[9] Doubtless the Angels conducted Him in His departure; and He indeed, before He ascended, lifting up His Hands, blessed His disciples.[10] Think over all this; excite yourself to sentiments of joy at the consummation of Christ's glory, and the hope of His help from Heaven, and pray to be ever one of His living members, perpetually growing in sanctity, that so, in His own good time, you may be in the same place with Him Who is your Head, and may moreover, be close to Him.

[8] St. Mark xvi. 15, 16. [9] Acts i. 9. [10] St. Luke xxiv. 50.

FRIDAY.

Our Redeemer Ascends.

1. Consider from what evils Christ has redeemed you, namely, from the slavery of sin and the power of the devil. Consider the greatness of this double benefit by the greatness of the two evils, and the impotence of nature to destroy them. Return thanks, therefore to your Redeemer; pray to Him, glorious in Heaven, that you may ever be free from these two evils; and in order thereto, cooperate with His grace working in you, avoiding all sin, resisting the temptations of the devil, and obeying the inspirations of God.

2. Consider at what price Christ redeemed you; His own Life, His Flesh, His Soul, His works of infinite value. Admire the liberality and love of Christ. Thank Him; offer Him all you have; and beg of Him, sitting in Heaven, to give you His grace, so that you may be able to give Him yourself, just as He gave Himself and all He had as the price of your redemption. Give Him, then, all your labour, by shunning idleness; your comforts, by shunning delicacies in food and clothing; your honour, by shunning vain pomp; with other like offerings.

3. Consider by what means He redeemed you: by blood; by a most terrible death and Passion. Be amazed at the excess of your Redeemer's love; thank Him; desire to suffer the like for Him; acknowledge what a mere nothing you bear for Him, and how justly you deserve to endure every possible suffering; and root out all the impatience and irritation that proceed therefrom.

4. Consider the end of your redemption; not only your eternal salvation, but the greater glory whereto Christ desires you to ascend. Why, then, do you not pant after that high place in Heaven? Why are you surpassed by worldlings, who seek more eagerly after riches, comforts, honours, and pleasures than you after the Kingdom of Heaven and a great glory therein? Be ashamed, and call upon Christ to draw you as close as possible to Himself.

SATURDAY.

The Son of the Virgin Mary Ascends.

1. Consider how Christ, in His Humanity, taken from the Virgin, reigns in Heaven as our Brother. What things therefore Joseph, endowed with less love and power, formerly bestowed on his unfriendly brothers, do you hope for in a better measure from Christ, and say to Him with tender affliction, what they said of old to Joseph—"I beseech thee to forget the wickedness of thy brethren, and the sin and malice they practised against thee."[11]

2. Consider the great glory of the human race in Heaven, on account of the most exalted glory of Christ's Humanity, raised to the highest throne therein. Congratulate Christ's Humanity; adore it with the utmost affection, and fill your heart with holy desires of approaching as near as possible to the place and the splendour of Christ's Humanity, in order to give pleasure and consolation to God.

[11] Gen. l. 17.

Think whether, and in what manner, you are seeking this.

3. Consider the joy of Christ's most holy Mother at the glory of His Humanity, formed out of her purest blood. Greater, doubtless, was her joy than that of the Patriarch Jacob when he beheld Joseph the prosperous governor of Egypt. Congratulate the Mother of God on this consolation; and pray through her that, by the merits of Christ, you may attain after this life, and, indeed, immediately after it, to the vision of that same glory, and to a place very near to Christ.

4. Consider the power of the Mother of God in Heaven, and her influence with her Son. For what request can be denied her by a Son reigning in Heaven, abounding in wealth, charity, and all good gifts, and Who does not, like the Kings of the earth, become poorer by giving? Therefore, think over your needs, and lay them before her, that through her you may obtain the mercy of God.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

1. Consider the love of Christ, Who so conveyed His Body to Heaven as yet to leave it here for your help and consolation; and try to make progress.

2. Consider that Christ left His Body here for your solace in a more wonderful manner than He took it to Heaven. For it is divisible as to the place or space which it occupies; here His whole Body is, with all its members, in the smallest particle of the consecrated Host, so that in touching one

portion of this Body, you touch at the same time by the sacramental species, every single portion thereof. Oh, what sweetness pours from hence into the heart that is wounded by Divine love! Here you can touch, even better than Magdalene did, not only the Feet of Christ, but, at one and the same time, His Head, His Eyes, the pupils of His Eyes, His Heart, and all His members; yea, and delight yourself therewith in all purity. See how you do all this, and learn to enjoy this blessing.

3. Consider the vastness of Christ's charity, Who left His Body to you, not in one place only, but in so many churches. Adore It in all of them, and often, but at least sometimes during the day; condole with Christ outraged in so many places by men who communicate unworthily, who remain before Him without due reverence, or who offend Him in other ways. And see that you be not, in this respect, their companion.

4. Consider the thoughts of Christ in the Eucharist; what also are His feelings, especially when the church is closed. Imagine yourself to be in a corner of the church alone, contemplating, in pious meditation, the thoughts and sentiments of Christ; gather from each one some spiritual fruit, and thank Him from the depth of your heart for so great a blessing.

MONDAY.

Our Future Judge Ascends.

1. Consider Christ as a Judge with respect to the just, for whom in Heaven, whereto He ascends, He

provides a reward according to the merits of each one. Strive, therefore, to let Him find as much merit in you as possible, and such as may obtain the most abundant rewards in Heaven. See if you be aiming at this, and see what you have to do.

2. Consider how easy it is to merit many rewards in Heaven. For if you be good, then, by the performance of any kind of work, rightly done, and for a supernatural end, you can merit some degree of glory. Examine here how many works pass on wherein you merit nothing, and how many for which you merit temporal punishment. Think over this, and amend.

3. Consider that this your Judge even now delivers judgment on your life, through the interior admonitions of your conscience. For conscience, as the administrator of God's justice, reproves you for the evil you commit. Look well, therefore, into the judgment of your conscience, see what things it chiefly reproves in you, and try to avoid them.

4. Consider the place and the rewards prepared for you by your Judge if He find you worthy of them. The place is more excellent than any in this life, the rewards are truly better than any you can possess here. Examine, therefore, whether you be seeking with as much effort, desire, and endeavour to obtain that place and reward, as you are seeking comforts in place and habitation, or any other temporal convenience appertaining to your honour or pleasure, and whether you aspire with the same effort and labour after that place and those rewards as men of the world after temporal places and rewards, whether in the Courts of Princes or anywhere else. Having seen your defects, accustom

yourself to desire and to seek more earnestly for those rewards which are by far the most excellent, and which never decay.

TUESDAY.

Our Lord Ascends.

1. Consider our happiness, in that we possess Christ our Lord in a manner common to other Christians. This you will recognize by reflecting on the reasons which make men in the world look on certain persons as their lords; all these reasons you will find in Christ, and in a far higher degree. Thank Him, therefore, for having made Himself your Lord and made you His servant, and see that by your deeds you show yourself His true and faithful servant.

2. Consider the special reasons for which Christ is your Lord, inasmuch as you are a member of His Order, which is indeed His servant in this spiritual warfare, and whose leader He Himself has deigned to be. Hence see your duty, or what you have to do and suffer in this sacred military service, that you may conform yourself to the will and examples of such a Captain.

3. Consider whether you so live in this sacred service as becomes the servant of God, and if you find anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider what consolation you should feel in having such a Lord, Who holds all creatures in His hand, as well as all good gifts, and Who can preserve you from all evil and enrich you with all good.

Strive, therefore, to be as grateful to Him as possible, and so become a partaker of His abundant bounty.

WEDNESDAY.

Our Physician Ascends.

1. Consider your diseases which need healing from Christ, namely, the various defects and evil habits in all your senses and the powers of your soul, with the propensity to evil anterior to those bad habits. Place yourself then before your Heavenly Physician as a leper in his bed, languishing and disfigured through many diseases. Humble yourself profoundly and beg for health.

2. Consider by what means your Heavenly Physician cures you; by the multiplied assistances of grace, exciting you to shun sin, to love virtue, to advance in virtue; again by the Sacraments, and other external helps, imparted by men, through good example and admonitions. See on the other hand what profit you derive from the use of these means, and if there be any negligence, correct it.

3. Consider the fountain whence this virtue springs for the cure of your infirmities, namely, the merits of Christ the Physician, made perfect by the effusion of His Blood and life. Acknowledge the excellence of the medicine, and the love of your Physician. Thank Him; give Him back love for love; and offer Him whatever is dearest to you; for nothing will you offer that can equal His merits, and His Blood poured out for you.

4. Consider the years you have spent in applying

these remedies for the cure of your diseases; whether the fruit correspond to the labour, and to the efficacy of these remedies. Be ashamed then, mourn, beg pardon, and amend.

OCTAVE OF THE ASCENSION.

Our Master Ascends.

1. Consider the means whereby our Heavenly Master teaches us—first by example, then by words; no example, even in the smallest thing, being otherwise than good. "He began," says St. Luke, "to do and to teach."[1] You therefore that are called to this state, that you may teach others according to your means, see if it be so with you, and what is wanting to you.

2. Consider the end aimed at by this Heavenly Master in teaching you—the glory of God and your good, which is placed in your salvation and perfection. Examine how far you are cooperating with such a Master, and correct what you see needs correction.

3. Consider what Christ has expressly taught us—"Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of Heart."[2] Here inquire into the reasons why He has expressly put forward only two virtues, meekness and humility; see what your behaviour is regarding them, and try to make progress.

4. Consider the places wherein this Master has taught us—everywhere, namely: in the crib, He teaches the love of manifold discomforts; in the Temple, ardent devotion; in the company of men,

[1] Acts i. 1. [2] St. Matt. xi. 29.

sanctity in our actions; on the road, pious conversation; at the table, moderation; on the Cross, patience; with other lessons in other places. See how you receive these lessons, and show them forth in your works; and conform yourself to your Heavenly Master.

FRIDAY.

He Ascends to Prepare us a Place.

1. Consider the eternal decree of God, Who, previous to any foreseen merits of ours, elected certain men to give them places in Heaven after this life, through certain appointed and efficacious means. Because this predestination is helped by prayer, beg earnestly to be of the number of the Elect.

2. Consider the nature and excellence of the place prepared by Christ in Heaven, far above all the happiness of this life; burn with an immense desire of reaching it; and search into the reasons which make you desire it so coldly.

3. Consider the necessity of your cooperation for reaching this place; for no adult is predestined to glory without good works continuing to the end of life, or without perseverance in justifying grace. See, therefore, what you have to do, that you may die in this state, and put away everything contrary thereto.

4. Consider that you can, if you will, be in a very high place in Heaven, for you can attain it through supernatural works, done very frequently and very

fervently, as well as by many trials patiently borne. See how it is with you in this matter, and stir up your tepidity by the example of seculars, who seek perhaps with more earnestness the first seats, and most honourable places in this world.

EVE OF WHIT SUNDAY.

He Ascends to give Gifts to Men.

1. Consider the various gifts of all kinds which our Lord has bestowed in all ages on His beloved ones; and for the glory of God and confusion of the devil, desire with an ardent longing that He may communicate Himself to them with the most abundant fruit.

2. Consider the riches of Christ, Who, without loss to Himself, can bestow on thee all the gifts which He has bestowed on all other Saints. Recognize your happiness; see what is needful to render this your rich Mæcenas favourable to you, and try to obtain it.

3. Consider that a most efficacious means of obtaining God's gifts is the performing acts of virtue in the opportunities given you by God, with ardent and continued prayers for obtaining virtue. See whether you make these offerings to God, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider that the second efficacious and most necessary means for obtaining God's gifts is a very careful avoidance of sin. For sin offends the Giver, and prevents Him from bestowing His liberality so copiously on you as He would wish. Examine

what is your conduct in this respect, and if you will be speedily and abundantly enriched by God, fly from all things which displease Him as from deadly poison.

WHIT SUNDAY.

1. Consider the first property of the Holy Spirit, Who appeared on the disciples in the form of fire, which is, namely, most pure in itself, neither having nor enduring within itself any dirt or stain; and because likeness begets love, if you will be loved by the Holy Spirit and be filled with His gifts, imitate this purity as far as you can. See whether you do this and how, and put away what is amiss.

2. Consider the second property of the Holy Spirit. He is, namely, like a most brilliant fire, enduring in itself no smoke, expelling everything foreign to itself, having within it no shade or darkness. Think how you should imitate this property.

3. Consider the third property of the Holy Spirit, because, like fire, He is foreign to the earth, is borne upwards, bearing, yea ravishing, upwards other things along with Him. Apply this to yourself, see how far it suits you, and endeavour to profit by it.

4. Consider the fourth property of the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as, like fire, He kindles and warms all that is near Him, and is in Himself full of intense ardour. Such are they who are filled with the Holy Spirit; such are rendered worthy of Him. Such we may become through the Holy Eucharist worthily received, after which, as St. Chrysostom says,[1] we

[1] Hom. 61, *Ad pop.*

should "depart from that table like lions breathing fire, terrible to the devil." See whether you are such a one, and why not; and strive to be such.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the fifth property of the Holy Spirit, signified by fire, which dries up what is moist, and suffers no dampness in itself. Thus truly does the Divine Spirit dry up, in the words of the Church, the "humours of wild desire," rendering the heart arid and sterile in regard of carnal allurements. See how it is with you, and learn from yourself what you have to do or to avoid.

2. Consider the sixth property of the Holy Spirit, exemplified by fire, which hardens many soft, pliant, and weak substances, and makes them strong to resist what opposes them. This effect of the Holy Spirit appears in the Martyrs and others, who resisted as unshaken rocks the temptations and trials which assailed them. See if you be like these, and why not, and put away all obstacles.

3. Consider the seventh property of the Holy Spirit, Who, like to fire, dissolves and liquifies dense substances. This He does in hearts which He moves to corporal tears, or at least to spiritual devotion of mind, whereby the heart, watered as it were by a celestial dew melts into pious affections towards God and heavenly things, and is rendered pliant and docile to every motion and direction of God and its Superiors. See if the Holy Spirit works thus in you, and why He does not, and if there be any impediments, remove them.

4. Consider the eighth property of the Holy Spirit, Who, like fire, ripens and flavours what is crude and tasteless. This appears in them to whom every cross of Christ and every suffering is desirable and beloved; such were all the Saints. Think how necessary this is, how acceptable it makes you to the Holy Spirit, how intimate with Him; beg Him earnestly that you may be such, and where opportunity occurs, try to be such.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the ninth property of the Holy Spirit, signified by fire, which purges many impure substances, removing rust and dross from any metal, cleansing it from dirt, and the like. This quality belongs to those who make others better by their good advice and example, and help to cure the defects of others, which all who are called to the Religious state should have at heart. See if you be like this, and what you ought to be.

2. Consider the tenth property of the Holy Spirit, like fire, always in motion, never idle; in the words of a certain Saint, "the power of the Holy Spirit knows no slow endeavours." This quality is wanting to the idle and those who spend their time amiss; see how it is with you, and take heed that you be not of this number.

3. Consider the eleventh property of the Holy Spirit, Who, like fire, requires matter whereon to work, and that failing, decreases, and again requires suitable matter, not matter of any sort whatsoever. Therefore examine what it is which retains the Holy

Spirit in the soul, and what it is that repels Him, and apply the thought to your own instruction.

4. Consider the twelfth property of the Holy Spirit, Who, like fire, diminishes that which He burns —diminishes faults, the motions of the passions, the vehemence of temptation, the concupiscence of the flesh, the tyranny of lust, worldly desires, &c., which He effects chiefly by the food of the Holy Eucharist. Why, therefore, receiving this food so often, do you not feel these effects of the Holy Spirit? Search into the causes, strive to remove them, and beg pardon ardently and humbly from the Holy Spirit and the most Blessed Eucharist.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the thirteenth property of the Holy Spirit, like to fire, which is of all the elements the most powerful, most active, and overcoming all things. This effect has been witnessed by so many unbelievers converted to faith, so many lukewarm to sanctity, so many most obstinate to devotion, so many impious and wicked men to the highest virtue. Why, therefore, do you not feel the power of the Holy Spirit working in you? Why does He conquer in you either nothing or hardly anything? Examine into the causes, show yourself docile to the Holy Spirit, and beg pardon for your slowness and resistance to Him.

2. Consider the fourteenth property of the Holy Spirit, Who, like fire, increases more and more, as more and more matter is given to work upon. Thus men full of the Holy Spirit decrease

not in their good works and labours, if more abundant matter be furnished them for labouring and suffering adversity, but they grow, and count it as gain if they have more work to do than others. See if you be one of these, and having bewailed your defects, amend.

3. Consider the fifteenth property of the Holy Spirit, like to fire, which reduces at length to dust and ashes that which it works upon for any long time. Thus indeed, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, do men of God esteem themselves to be most vile, like to dust and ashes, and as vile dust do they desire to be humbled, and to be trampled under foot. You, on the contrary, savour high things, strive after the vain smoke of honour, are indignant with those who despise you, set yourself against those who oppose you, and yet would pass for one seeking the Holy Spirit! Detest all this, and dispose yourself to do as the Holy Spirit does.

4. Consider the sixteenth property of the Holy Spirit, like to fire, which cannot be hidden in anything, but quickly shows forth its strength and power. So the solid mind of the spiritual man, cannot be hidden by adversity, nor by occasions of imperfection, nor by distracting occupations; not by a crowd of men, not by honours, nor favours. Everywhere his virtue shines forth—interiorly before God, exteriorly before men—displaying itself in word and deed. See if it be thus with you, and if you find that vice instead of virtue comes out everywhere, blush, beg pardon of God, and amend.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which the Holy Spirit came down from Heaven as a wind, and a mighty wind, namely, because like to wind He propels the soul to sail swiftly, and so to reach the desired port of grace in this life, and abundant glory in the next. See how swift is your progress towards this double haven; if slow, why slow; and draw hence manifold pious sentiments.

2. Consider the second reason for which the Holy Spirit came down like wind; because, namely, without distinction of places or things, He pervades alike foul marshes and most delightful gardens, alike the stable and the palace. So they who act by the Spirit of God attach themselves not to grand places, persons, or offices; shun not those that are mean; but everywhere seek and find God with the same interior relish. See if you are of this number; if not blush, and endeavour to be such.

3. Consider the third reason for which the Holy Spirit comes with the sound of mighty wind; because, wind opposes itself to things very high, casting them down and overthrowing them, so He puts down the proud and haughty, but "giveth grace to the humble."[2] See whether you are high in your own esteem and your manner of life; you are not, if by word and deed you show yourself humble to your Superiors and equals, if you envy not those who are raised to higher things, if you are not disturbed thereat, &c.

[2] St. James iv. 6.

4. Consider the fourth reason for which the Holy Spirit came down as wind, because, as wind disperses the thick clouds, and sometimes gathers them together, so the unction of the Holy Spirit now profitably saddens the soul, now, when it is needful, gladdens it. Therefore, in either state the soul should cleave to the Spirit of God, not overflowing in time of prosperity, through license and laxity, nor letting itself down in time of trial, changing in desolation the resolutions made in the hour of consolation. See if such be the state of your soul, and endeavour to attain to it.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of tongues; because, namely, as the tongue makes known the secrets of the heart, so the Holy Spirit opens to the Church of God and to holy souls the Divine will, by teaching, by inspiration, &c. By this Master, the Church, the Roman Pontiff, the Bishops of the Church, and all the Faithful, by the lawful ordinary means, are taught every necessary truth. Give thanks to so great a Doctor. Beg Him to teach you in the ordinary way all common and ordinary doctrines, and see that you show yourself a docile disciple when He teaches you what to shun and what to seek.

2. Consider the second reason for which the Holy Spirit showed Himself under the form of tongues; because, as the tongue speaks not after the same manner in all (in infants it does not utter sounds

expressing interior thoughts, in adults it does), so the Divine Spirit communicates Itself in a different manner to those who are as infants in the way of the Lord, and to those who by growth in virtue are adults. See to which number you belong, and try to be one of the mature souls.

3. Consider the third reason for which the Holy Spirit may be compared to tongues; because, as the tongue is given by God for good words, that is, for the praise of God, holy conversation, the confession of sin, and the like, so the Spirit of God urges to such speech. All contrary words, therefore, proceed not from the Spirit of God, but from the evil spirit. See how it is with you, and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

4. Consider the fourth reason for which the Holy Spirit took the form of tongues; because He would teach the Apostles to be in all things as tongues, telling and spreading the glory of God; tongues in speech, tongues in action, tongues in silence, tongues in rest, tongues in motion. Thus, imbued with this Spirit, far better than the heavens did they show forth the glory of God; far more excellently did they bless God than the moon, sun, water, earth, mountains, beasts, birds, &c., to all of which the Sacred Scripture attributes tongue and speech. See whether you are in all things such a tongue as this, and strive to be one, having put away all your imperfections.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Bona cuncta Posce.

1. Consider how well fitted is the most Blessed Virgin for obtaining all good gifts; on account of her being so dear to God, and also because her prayers are most fervent, and their end most excellent. Congratulate her on this perfection; see if you have these three qualifications, and try to acquire them, that so in your own way you may have the grace to obtain what is necessary, both for yourself and others.

2. Consider what is the gift, as it were, of the first order of which you stand in need, and for the attainment whereof you require the prayers of the Mother of God: it is the glory of Heaven, to gain which especially the most fervent prayers are needed. Here reflect upon the excellence, usefulness, and necessity of heavenly glory, abounding as it does with the accumulated wealth of all good gifts, and think how easily it is lost by many. Having therefore aroused in yourself an ardent desire, implore with a like ardent affection the Blessed Virgin that she may ask and obtain for you every grace.

3. Consider the gifts of the second order, to obtain which, and then not to lose, but to increase them, you need the prayers of the Blessed Virgin. These are your justification and perseverance in all that appertains thereto, without which no man shall see God. To this kind of gifts, belongs the two-fold grace of God—(1) That whereby you are preserved or delivered from evils which either destroy grace in

the soul, or prevent it from entering in; (2) the gifts of grace themselves, whereby the soul is justified, and grows in the favour of God, which is the seed of glory and the right to glory. Having considered therefore the necessity, with the manifold utility and excellence of those benefits, and the facility of losing them, beg earnestly of the Blessed Virgin to ask all good for you.

4. Consider the good gifts of the third order—namely, those pertaining to the spiritual help of others; such as the conversion of sinners and unbelievers, and the encouragement of the converted to a more perfect life. Again, gifts for the lawful support of the body, and for a suitable mode of life, which are likewise necessary; to which class may be reduced also those things which regard the liberal education of the mind, and the leading of a tranquil life. Having pondered on the necessity of these things, beg the Blessed Virgin to obtain them also for you, in so far as they conduce to the glory of the most great and high God, and hinder not nor endanger those graces of a higher order which we have called to mind in the former points.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

1. Consider in God the wonderful Unity of Nature and the Trinity of Persons. The one excludes all division in itself, the other maintains the distinction of the three most perfect Persons. Inasmuch as this truth surpasses the comprehension of nature, venerate it in a holy silence; when you reach Heaven you may hope to understand it. Imitate it

nevertheless according to your power, keeping your flesh so obedient to the spirit formed on Divine teaching, as though it were a most simple unity, without discord; living with others, even with many, as though you were of one heart, judgment, and will with all men soever, regarding what is good. See if you be such as this, and cut off what needs to be removed.

2. Consider the mystery of the triple number in the Divinity; why, namely, the Divine Nature is not content with one Person, or with two Persons, why it will not have more than three; that, besides other pious considerations, you may learn to shun both the solitude which shrinks from common life, and also the familiarity of any one person, and not to make your secrets known to many. Ponder on this, apply it to yourself, and gather spiritual fruit.

3. Consider the incorruptibility of God, as well in His Nature as in the interior acts of His intellect and will. For nothing that is in God can ever fail, either in its nature, or from any external cause. Compare your imperfections with this perfection. See how you fail in everything; how you change in an hour, yea, in a moment; and humble yourself hereupon. As far as lies in you, try to imitate our Lord God, by acquiring constancy in things well begun, that you may not through any bad advice, or example, or occasion, or temptation, or your own will, fall away from anything you have begun well, or have promised to do. See if you do this, and try to do it.

4. Consider the most pure Nature of our Lord God, unmixed with aught else, separated from all that is earthly, cherishing in Itself naught but the

Divine. On the other hand look at your own nature, so mixed with earthly things, imbued with so little that is spiritual, and learn to recall yourself to spiritual purity, and to draw as closely as possible to the Divine Nature, especially since you are created to Its image and likeness, and should represent in your life and conduct the image of the second and celestial Adam.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the immensity of God, whereby He is more intimately and immediately present to all created things, in His whole Divine Substance and Nature, than one creature is in touching another. Hence gather two lessons—(1) That you should behave in such a manner, at least, as you would behave in thought, word, and deed if you perceived the presence of any Saint whom you feared, and whom you knew for certain to be aware of all the secrets of your heart, and to see them most intimately; (2) that you should so perform your interior and exterior actions relating to created objects as not to be in anything injured by them, just as God is present ever to the foulest objects, remaining incorrupt and immaculate Himself. See if you be such as this, and strive to be such, for His greater glory and consolation.

2. Consider the riches of God's Nature, which neither uses nor needs any created thing for its own advantage. Admire and extol this excellence; invite the holy Angels, the blessed spirits, and all

creatures to admire it. You may imitate this perfection by using created and lawful things in as small a number, as seldom, and as rarely as possible; by living in the most thorough poverty, and, as the Saints of old say, in the most utter nakedness of all things, for the good pleasure and consolation of your Lord. See if you do this, and try to conform yourself to your Lord God.

3. Consider the eternity of God without beginning, or end. Think how happy is that servant who has so unfailing a Lord, full of all good, who has prepared such lasting rewards for His faithful servants. Burn with His love; strive that this love may be equally firm and lasting, together with all other virtues and good purposes, so that on no occasion and by no temptation they may fail. See whether you be firm like this, and try to be so.

4. Consider the independence of God, depending on no creature; neither needing, nor being able to need, the help of any, but content in Himself. Because you have not this independence, but are in need both of God and creatures, humble yourself, and on the one hand rejoice that, willing or unwilling, you are forced to depend on God for many reasons; count as your great happiness this necessity of depending on Him, and rejoice that all creatures depend on Him. On the other hand, resolve to depend on God alone; not in that spirit in which proud and rebellious hearts despise and disregard others towards whom they entertain a certain aversion, but in that spirit which belongs to the servants of God, who, having paid to others the love and reverence due to them, seek no advantage or honour for themselves, but rather the contrary,

being content with God alone. See if you have this spirit and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the infinite power of the Divine Nature, whereby He can create all things out of nothing, destroy what is most powerful, produce infinitely more and more perfections, and without any instruments, without delay, without any difficulty or any fatigue. There is in Him the same power with regard to the supernatural effects of grace and glory. Admire the excellence of so powerful a Nature, rejoice that you have so powerful a Lord, and pray Him to show forth in you this power, by preserving you, making you perfect, and adding from day to day new gifts, both natural and supernatural, to the glory of His Name.

2. Consider the infinite wisdom of the Divine Nature, which knows most perfectly the nature, properties, effects, and powers of all things, with whatever appertains to them, and sees most clearly whatever is, was, or shall be in you, seeing equally the future and the past. Take care, therefore, that His so penetrating eye sees nothing in you deserving of blame, and because many of your past acts have been such, pray Him to hide them by the gifts of His grace, or rather to destroy them, so that He may no longer remember them, as He Himself has promised to the truly penitent. That you may obtain this, try to be like those to whom the Divine Wisdom has made this promise.

3. Consider, the infinite goodness of the Divine Nature, whereby He loves all the creatures created for your sake, and declares this love by His acts; whereby also, which is a still greater thing, He loves you, although unworthy of this love, and does not condemn you at once, nor deprive you of His gifts, as you have deserved, but rather enriches you with new blessings. Strive therefore to give Him love for love, to do nothing which may displease this love, to love others also, although they may be unworthy of your love, since never could even the worst of them so offend you as you have offended this infinite goodness. Examine whether you imitate it in this love of others, and try earnestly to do so.

4. Consider the plenitude of perfections in God, whereby He is wanting in no true perfection, and whereby every perfection in Him is infinitely excellent. Why therefore are not your thoughts, affections, and exterior actions as much directed to God as they are to the vilest creatures? Blush, bewail your folly, and amend. On the other hand, for the glory of God, imitate His perfections so that all may be in you most perfect and excellent, and as like to God as possible.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the interior thoughts of God, and how they were occupied both from eternity and in time—namely, with the Divinity and the perfections thereof, which they contemplate; with good creatures and with evil creatures, detesting and putting these away. Consider again the manner wherein

He thinks of these things, without any imperfection, distraction, or wandering, but with the most perfect contemplation of Himself. Then consider your own thoughts with regard to their objects, manner, and end; and having bewailed their defects, endeavour to conform them to the thoughts of God.

2. Consider the interior sentiments of God our Lord—of love, hatred, joy, desire, and the like, though, so to speak, they are without any imperfection in God our Lord. Reflect how well ordered they are, with how just an end, how pure, and to what objects they are turned. Consider on the contrary your own sentiments of the same kind; see how unlike they are to His; mourn, and resolve to amend.

3. Consider the exterior acts of Divine mercy and goodness—how God averts and removes evil from men who deserve it; how even He bestows good things on the unworthy, on those who ask not, often on the unwilling; after ingratitude received, on those who frequently offend Him; and all for no advantage of His own, but only for that of men. See if you be of this spirit; bewail your defects, and try to imitate God.

4. Consider the exterior acts of God's avenging justice, punishing at length more lightly than we deserve; sparing many, sparing you too for so many years, when He has not spared others for smaller sins than yours. Having reflected on yourself, correct what may need correction in your own severity; give hearty thanks for this gentleness of God; try to love it tenderly, and to imitate it.

CORPUS CHRISTI.

1. Consider the greatness of the gift which God bestows on us in the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist, wherein He gives us His Soul, full of so many merits, His most holy Body, yea, and His Divinity. Having compared this gift with the other gifts of God, as well as with human gifts, acknowledge the stupendous magnitude of Divine love towards us, and think how much we are bound to show gratitude to such a Benefactor; far more indeed than any other creature should display towards God, or towards creatures, for lesser gifts received.

2. Consider the facilities for receiving so often a gift of such excellence. For it is not needful to go away to far distant regions, to incur great expense, to undergo much labour, but only to approach the altar with a pure conscience. See whether the world offer its painted gifts as easily to its followers, or rather whether they be not most difficult of attainment, and when they are indeed not worthy of the name of gifts. Why then do you desire the delights of the world more ardently than the Blessed Eucharist? Why do we enjoy them with a greater relish than the Blessed Eucharist? Be ashamed, blush, and amend.

3. Consider with what indignity the Blessed Sacrament is treated. By heretics with blasphemies and contempt; by many bad Catholics with mortal sin on their consciences when they communicate: and by tepid Religious, approaching this Sacrament

with irreverence and negligence. Compassionate your Lord, Who is accustomed in so many ways to unworthy treatment. Mourn if you also have ever so treated Him; if there be anything to amend, amend it; and by the example of Christ your Lord in the Eucharist, enduring so many insults, learn to bear with joy your own far smaller affronts.

4. Consider the reverence, devotion, and holy affection towards the most Blessed Sacrament, both in the holy Angels, and in men who lead holy lives; and having thought over the various motives thereto, excite in yourself similar reverence, devotion, and affection. Finally, having given thanks for such a gift, offer something yourself to Jesus in a grateful spirit, and offer this most Divine Sacrament for the greatest possible glory of the Blessed Trinity, for all His benefits, for all our sins, and for obtaining efficacious help in all our necessities.

FRIDAY.

On the Person of Christ in the Eucharist.

1. Consider the Divine Person of Christ our Lord Who gives Himself to you in the Eucharist. It is the Eternal Son and Word of the Father, born of the Father from all eternity; from Whom together with the Father proceeds from eternity the Holy Spirit; and Who in time unites to Himself hypostatically that Body and Soul which He assumed for our redemption in the womb of the most Blessed Virgin Mary. Whence, having reflected upon the antiquity, the eternity, the breadth and the immensity

of this Person, Who fills Heaven, and every corner of earth and hell—His immortality, impassibility, dominion over all created things, power, goodness, wisdom, infinite sanctity, and every other perfection —conceive a great esteem for the Eucharist, which brings to you with Itself so excellent a Person. Having compared therewith the vileness and unworthiness of your own person, humble yourself, and be ashamed; extol the dignity of Christ your Lord, so honouring and assisting you; and give love for love to so great a Benefactor, not only in words and affections of the heart, but in deed and effect.

2. Consider the interior acts of this Person, giving Himself to you in the Eucharist, as referred to the two other Persons of the most Holy Trinity; how, namely, they understand, love, enjoy, and converse with one another with infinite joy, glory, and incomprehensible beatitude; absorbed in one another through the magnitude of the object, and through the magnitude of the joy, love, comprehension, and Divine fruition wherewith the Divine Persons are filled in an infinite degree; and how nevertheless thus Divinely occupied in one another, they disdain not to give Themselves to you, especially the Person of the Eternal Word, that you also He may love, converse with, and in some measure enjoy with relish. Consider, therefore, whether you be a fitting object for Christ our Lord, thus present to you, to relish, love, think of, and enjoy; and endeavour to show yourself such to Him, having put away all that can diminish or prevent this relish.

3. Consider the acts of this Person as regards creatures. For Christ, Who gives Himself to you in the Eucharist, thence also, together with the

Father and the Holy Spirit, produces, preserves, and governs everything new; thence also He bestows all gifts in Heaven and on earth; thence also He gives rewards, thence punishes. From all this gather necessary instructions.

4. Consider what your person should be; what your interior and exterior acts regarding God and creatures, since you receive within you so often such a Person as Christ, with such acts as His; and resolve to correct your heart and life, and to put on the actions of Christ.

SATURDAY.

On the Soul and Powers of Christ in the Eucharist.

1. Consider the substance of the Soul of Christ our Lord, which gives Itself to you in the Eucharist, and behold how sweet is the sight of this Soul to the most Holy Trinity, and why. Then compare therewith the substance of your own soul, and discern hence its dissimilarity, and what such dissimilarity should produce, namely, shame, and the desire of acquiring a most perfect conformity and similarity to the Soul of Christ.

2. Consider the intellect of the Soul of Christ our Lord, which gives Itself to you in the Eucharist; wherewith It is employed, how much, in what manner, by what acts. Compare with It thy own intellect and the acts thereof, with the manner of Its acts, and other circumstances; and from these gather necessary lessons for the reformation of your intellect and its acts, and their conformity to the intellect of Christ.

3. Consider the will of Christ and its acts, what, namely, while He is in you in the Eucharist, He desires, hates, loves, delights in; how much, in what manner, to what end; and applying all to your profit, examine, compare therewith your will and its acts, and try to conform yourself to Christ.

4. Consider how the perfection of the Soul of Christ our Lord and of Its powers consists in five things: (1) In the plenitude of sanctifying grace; (2) in the abundance of supernatural habits, agreeable to Christ's state; (3) in the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are distinct from the habits of virtues which are infused also into us; (4) in the admirable excellence of all Its acts; (5) in the infinite merits which It possessed for Its own glory and our good, that out of the fulness thereof we might all draw abundantly. On the other hand, compare with these five points your own soul and its powers, that you may recognize how great is the distance between them, and be ashamed, understanding at the same time that you ought to be in a certain degree very similar to Christ, eating and drinking as you do so often Him Who is so holy, so full of virtues, gifts, perfections, and merits. Examine therefore why you are not like Him, mourn, and amend.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

On the Great Banquet of Christ.

1. Consider the meats wherewith our Lord God feeds you in this banquet, and which are habitually placed before you by God in the Eucharist. They are: (1) The Three Divine Persons; (2) the Soul of

Christ; (3) the Body of Christ; (4) the most holy Sacramental Species themselves. Gather hence how far this banquet surpasses all other feasts which ever were or could be given from the accumulated treasures of all Kings, Extol therefore the liberality of God, recognize your happiness, and bewail your stupidity, which knows not how to appreciate such a banquet, and to enjoy it as it ought to be enjoyed.

2. Consider the table whereon this food is prepared and placed before thee, namely, the most holy altar, which, sanctified by the consecration of the Church, the presence of sacred relics, the worship of God and of the Saints, is far holier than the altars of the Old Testament, and worthy of a greater respect than any table whereat Emperors and Kings of the earth have sat. Now, with what reverence, gravity, and attention to avoid anything unbecoming, would you approach the table of an earthly King? See whether you approach with at least equal reverence this Divine table, and make resolutions according to the dispositions you shall find in yourself.

3. Consider the means whereby this Divine food is prepared before being consumed, namely, by a person consecrated in a wonderful manner, and possessing a wonderful power of really changing, by Divine omnipotence, the whole substance of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ our Lord. As our Lord God never in any period before Christ gave such power to any Saint, even when He gave power to raise the dead and other miracles, be amazed at so great a liberality for your sake, considering especially this power of the Priest, always depending on his own free will, it being never granted to any Saint that his power came when he willed. Therefore

pour out all the tenderness of your soul, and whatsoever thou hast and canst, give to thy generous God, and, as it were, transubstantiate yourself into that which He demands of you, not for His own advantage, which He needs not, but for yours.

4. Consider the seasonings of this banquet; the eternal and infinite love which impelled God to prepare such a feast for you; the infinite objective glory, to the attainment of Whose beatific vision this repast is given you; and the infinite merits, which, although in a finite manner, are applied to you by feeding on Christ in the Eucharist, if you approach this banquet in fitting disposition. From all this, gather in what manner and with what amendment of life you should make use of this banquet.

MONDAY.

On the Limbs of Christ in the Eucharist.

1. Consider the Hands of Christ our Lord, which you receive in the Eucharist, namely, how many, how wonderful, how salutary were those things which they did, for thirty-three years and more; wherewith they were occupied, what they suffered for your sake; and draw hence lessons for the lawful and necessary use of your hands.

2. Consider the Tongue of Christ our Lord, how, namely, He used it in eating, drinking, speaking with men, praying vocally, singing, &c., and compare herewith the acts of your own tongue, so as to correct what needs correction, and to conform yourself to Christ our Lord.

3. Consider the other actions of the Limbs of Christ, such as His walk, the position of His Feet, &c., and reform your own actions in accordance with His.

4. Consider the manner wherein the Limbs of Christ are disposed in the Eucharist, that is, although they are truly placed and connected together as they should be, nevertheless, as they are without extension as to order and place, they are each and all in the very smallest particle of the consecrated Host; so that not only He gives Himself entirely to you as your food in the Eucharist, but in a manner gives Himself in infinite ways, for innumerable particles of the Host may be given, in each of which He is entire. What therefore will you give in return to your Lord, Who has given Himself to you wholly in so many ways? Adore and love this profuse and lavish liberality of your God, thus pouring Himself out upon you; and by a corresponding affection of gratitude, showing itself by its works to be deserving of so great a gift, return love for love to your admirable Benefactor.

TUESDAY.

On the Excellence of the Eucharistic Feast.

1. Consider the reasons why the food of the Eucharist is superior to all other food and drink which the God and Creator of all things has created and provided for men throughout the whole world. Hence learn, if men labour and suffer so much, lest they perish from hunger and thirst, and if they long

and seek so eagerly for food and drink, how much should you do and suffer, how ardently should you long for this food of the Eucharist.

2. Compare the Eucharist with the manna, and with the water of the smitten rock, given to the Jews. Having recognized how far it excels them, see how exact are the modern Jews in the observance of all their ceremonies; how united they are, how they maintain themselves, although oppressed by many toils, and vexed by Christians; although they live without King, Priest, Sacrifice, Ark, or Temple! And you, supported by so many interior and exterior helps, how easily do you break the laws of God and of Religion! Be ashamed then, weep for your wickedness, and firmly resolve on a change of life.

3. Compare the Eucharist with the hearth-cake and water brought by the Angel to Elias, that he might walk in the strength of that food forty days and nights. Having recognized the superiority of the Eucharist, examine why you are so weak on your spiritual journey; why you make no progress; why you are so easily overcome by a trifling sensual gratification and submit yourself to the devil? Having ascertained the reasons, avoid them in future.

4. Compare the Eucharist with the food of Daniel, let down by the Angel with Habacuc into the den of lions. Consider that in this world you are in a more perilous state than Daniel in the den of lions, and receive in the Eucharist a greater benefit than his. If then Daniel, both then and afterwards, worshipped his God with such incredible affection on account of this favour, oh, with what far greater affection should you worship your Lord

Jesus, thus giving Himself to you! Whence cry out as Daniel did in the den—"Thou hast remembered me, O God, and Thou hast not forsaken them that love Thee."[1] And that which a holy affection may suggest, offer to your Lord for so great a benefit.

WEDNESDAY.

On the Effects of the Eucharist.

1. Consider that Christ in the Eucharist, is given to you as your King and Lord, Whose will you should perform, just as the vilest slaves obey the commands of their King; and hence, furthermore, that you should not live more splendidly than your King has lived. See how you are imitating, in these two points, the habits of servants and slaves regarding their masters and Kings; bewail your own actions and amend. This also should the Eucharist impart: that not in name only, but in fact and deed, It should make you a true servant of Christ, conformed to His will and to the life of this most Divine food.

2. Consider that Christ is given to you as your Benefactor. Consider, therefore, of what virtues you perceive the increase in you after the so frequent visits of this Benefactor. Whereupon, if you see in yourself few or none of His gifts, examine into the causes and impediments, and strive with all your heart to remove them.

3. Consider that Christ is given to you in the Eucharist as your Physician. Consider, therefore, whether your diseases—that is, your sins—are

[1] Daniel xiv. 37.

diminished in you by so frequently receiving this Physician ; also, whether the dispositions to spiritual diseases, namely the inordinate motions of your passions, are more and more quieted in you ; again, whether the remains of your diseases, namely the evil habits acquired by bad actions, are diminished in you. Having thought over all this, prepare yourself for that which the Holy Spirit may suggest.

4. Consider that you receive Christ our Lord in the Eucharist as the food of your soul. Examine, therefore, whether you feel in yourself those effects which food produces in the body; whether you behave in the same way regarding the Eucharist, before and after Its reception, as you behave in regard to your bodily food, before and during its reception, and gather from each point necessary lessons for the reformation of your life.

THURSDAY.

On the Affections required towards the Holy Eucharist.

1. Consider the reverence which is due to the Eucharist on account of that which is contained therein ; how this reverence should be shown towards It, and how it was shown by the Apostles, by Christ our Lord when in the flesh ; afterwards by the Angels, by the Saints, yea, sometimes by the very beasts. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and correct your defects, after duly bewailing them.

2. Consider the gratitude due for this benefit ; having weighed its magnitude, having considered the Eucharist in Itself, the mind of the Giver, the end

thereof, the dispositions which It can bestow; and on the other hand, having reflected on the gratitude of heathens themselves towards their benefactors. And, moved at least by their example, determine seriously how you shall for the future show your gratitude towards Christ.

3. Consider the love wherewith you should burn towards this most holy Sacrament; having reflected on all the motives of love; namely how good, noble, salutary, and agreeable it is; how all these qualities are real and not fictitious; again, having considered the love wherewith the Holy Eucharist was from eternity destined for you, and wherewith It was instituted at the Last Supper; again, having considered how God in the Eucharist desires to make you as like as possible to Himself in regard to grace and eternal glory. And turning your thoughts upon yourself, resolve upon that which justice and the great love of our Lord Jesus Christ demand.

4. Consider the spirit of imitation wherewith you should gladden Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. You may reflect upon the following points for imitation. Think (1) how many and grievous are the injuries He endures from blasphemous and unworthy communicants, and how He displays no sentiment of revenge nor even the sign thereof; (2) how He never has deserted, on account of the sins and forgetfulness of men, the Eucharistic species, wherein He has made Himself present after consecration, but remains as long as the species remain; (3) how He obeys the will even of a sacrilegious Priest who consecrates the Host, immediately placing Himself in the species after the words of consecration; (4) how He disdains not to enter an evil-smelling, often diseased mouth,

and often even an unclean stomach; (5) how everything whatsoever that God possesses in His Divine and Human Nature, He gives to you in the Eucharist. From all these thoughts, collect others similar to them, whereby, through imitation and carrying them out in your actions, you may make some return to Christ your Lord, and conform yourself to Him.

FRIDAY.

On the Excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

1. Consider the excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, with respect to that which is offered therein—namely, the Body, Soul, and Blood of Christ; and reflect upon the greatness, both natural and supernatural, of each one of these three things. From hence it follows that never before was anything offered to God, so excellent and so precious to Him. Give thanks to God, Who has mads men the offerers of a thing so excellent; think how you should assist at such a Sacrifice, and how grateful you should be for so great a Divine benefit, which you offer so often, either by yourself, or through the Priest; and be full of great hope of your salvation, when God to sanctify and save your soul has made you partaker of a gift so very great and so acceptable to Himself.

2. Consider the excellence of the Sacrifice of the Mass, with respect to the manner of its celebration—namely, the transubstantiation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, to which transmutation nothing similar was ever known before, and which is more wonderful and difficult than raising the dead to life, giving sight to the blind, or

any other former miracle. Admire the Divine goodness, which for your good has intrusted to you, or to your fellow-creatures, so marvellous a function. Thank Him, and show yourself grateful by your deeds.

3. Consider the excellence of this Sacrifice, with respect to the thing signified—namely, the Passion of Christ, which it represents, and of which it is the lively commemoration. For as the Passion of Christ is our highest benefit, and the thing of all others the most stupendous, because endured for such vile creatures, out of an immense love for us and desire of our salvation; and as there is the most excellent representation thereof in this Sacrifice, therefore it is fitting that you call to mind this great benefit with the tenderest affection, when you are present at the Sacrifice. See whether, and how, you do this, and strive diligently to do so.

4. Consider the excellence of this Sacrifice, in regard of Him to Whom it is offered. For it is so great that it cannot without the most grievous sin be offered to any other than God alone, not even to the most Blessed Virgin, nor to the Humanity of Christ, nor to all the Saints and the Humanity of Christ put together. Dwell on this thought, and try to penetrate it as far as possible, so as to conceive the very highest opinion of the excellence of this Sacrifice; see with what sentiments of devotion and Divine love you should be present thereat, or offer it, and if you have failed in this respect, amend.

SATURDAY.

On the Value and Fruit of this Sacrifice.

1. Consider the value of this Sacrifice. It is as great as the value of all Christ's merits; and the effects and fruits of His Passion are applied thereby to the living and the dead; to the living that is, for the conversion of sinners, the justification of the wicked, the progress of the just in sanctity, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit whereby the just are adorned, confirmation in grace, final perseverance, the aids of grace, and celestial glory. And because, according to the measure of devotion in the offerers, this Sacrifice confers these effects, take care to assist thereat, or to offer it, with the greatest possible devotion. See if you do this; and if there be any tepidity, put it away.

2. Consider the reverence and affection wherewith holy men assisted at or offered this Sacrifice, especially our holy Father Ignatius, who was inflamed with love, bathed in tears, and so absorbed in spirit from the fervour of his most intense devotion and love of God, that he was unable to speak. Thus also St. Francis heard Mass so devoutly that others were moved by the sight of him. Compare herewith your own manner of hearing or saying Mass; bewail your defects, and excite yourself by various motives to the highest reverence and devotion.

3. Consider the divers necessities of the living and the dead, which demand the help of this Sacrifice. As therefore you are a member of the same Church, and one of their brethren, see how

fervently, how diligently, you should offer this Sacrifice, either by yourself or through the Priest, so as effectually to help your brethren, living and dead.

4. Consider the pleasure derived by the most Blessed Trinity from the oblation of this Sacrifice. For it is the greatest and most perfect of all oblations, more perfect by its nature than the acts of love of the Blessed in Heaven towards God. Taste with your soul the sweetness of this oblation; smell the fragrant odour which this sacred immolation of the Immaculate Lamb of God diffuses in Heaven before the throne of the Divine Majesty; take heed lest by your defects in hearing or saying Mass, you in a manner diminish or taint this most delightful sweetness and fragrance; but rather strive that all which this Sacrifice has from and in itself, it may also have from you, in a manner proportioned to your acts, by the perfection wherewith you say or offer up the Mass.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider how the publicans and sinners approached our Lord Jesus to hear Him—namely, with what sentiments, what desire, what love, with what thoughts and exterior deportment. Gather something for your imitation, and express it by your own acts when approaching the same Lord Jesus teaching and feeding you in the most Holy Eucharist.

2. Consider the interior affection wherewith Christ our Lord received sinners and publicans when they

came to Him, although He pursued their sins with the greatest hatred. On the other hand, examine with what affection you receive your fellow-creatures who have not offended you as the publicans offended Christ by their sins; and consider whether it be not your duty to receive all such with greater affection, especially when you so many times receive Christ in the Eucharist, which is the symbol of charity and union, and to which your rancour, aversions, vindictiveness, detraction, and the like are most repugnant. At the same time acknowledge the very great benefits of God towards you, and thank Him for having called and drawn you, as one of those publicans, to Himself.

3. Consider the wicked murmurs of the Pharisees and Scribes, saying—"This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them;"[1] as though they said, He shows this benevolence to the unworthy; or, certainly He does not do well to converse with such, and admits them to His presence. Examine yourself, and see whether you in another way thus condemn others, and murmur at them, thereby offending God, gaining no fruit, but injuring your own conscience; and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

4. Consider your happiness, to whom Christ voluntarily offers Himself, to whom He approaches so often in the Eucharist, not mortal as He displayed Himself to those mortals, not without the full measure of His merits, which before His death were not complete, but full of merits, glorious, bestowing on you His heavenly gifts, preparing for you a place in Heaven; and not only speaking to you by interior inspirations, but giving you the food and drink of

[1] St. Luke xv. 2.

His Body and Blood, none of which things He did for the publicans. Admire His goodness, thank Him, praise Him, and show your gratitude by your deeds.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the love of God towards men; He, leaving the ninety-nine sheep in the desert, that is, so many angelic spirits without help, came down for you, the hundredth sheep; and for you, at so great a cost, endured so much for thirty-four years in the flesh; although by nature, and the graces which they formerly possessed, as well as by all things else, those Angels were more noble than you. Admire the mercy of God, give Him thanks; and because you cannot do it aright, invite the good Angels to thank Him with you, and more fervently than you.

2. Consider the end which Christ had in view when He came down for your sake, at so great a cost. See how you are cooperating therewith; how you are seeking that for which He came down—for which He did and suffered so much; and endeavour to profit, mourning over your present state, wherein you correspond not to a God Who is seeking your good.

3. Consider for what reasons God left the bad angels without help, when they had only once offended Him, whereas He willed to help you, whom He foresaw would sin often and grievously, with other men. Excite yourself thus to a great love of God, and to an intense gratitude, to be shown forth in your words and deeds.

4. Consider these wonderful words of Christ our Lord—"There shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance."[2] And by the consideration thereof, grow in the love of God, and try to advance.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the fruits of a good life—"Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting; and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life."[3] Now the word of Christ our Lord is two-fold—precept and counsel; to which belong the interior inspirations of God, and the exterior good admonitions of others, even of our equals. Think what a great thing it is to have life eternal, not to come into judgment, to have passed from death to life; see how you hear the words of Christ, and determine what you have to do.

2. Consider for what reasons the Eternal Father has given to Christ "power to do judgment, because He is the Son of Man."[4] This judicial power, namely, has been won by Christ the Son of Man, as a reward for the labours and sufferings which He endured, and the good works which He performed as Man. Hence acknowledge the liberality of God in rewarding those who do well; excite yourself to a similar liberality, and see if you deserve such rewards.

[2] St. Luke xv. 7.

[3] St. John v. 24. [4] St. John v. 27.

3. Consider the fruits of the Religious state—since we know from the holy Gospel that a similar, though not so high a judicial power, has been promised to Religious. Reflect on the greatness of this dignity, comparing it with the judicial power of men. As, therefore, men who are raised thereto are wont to love and esteem those who have raised them, and to render themselves deserving in their eyes, what should be your conduct towards God, Who has exalted you to so high a place?

4. Consider the different ends of God's judgments—"They that have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment."[5] Look you into the state of your conscience, both past and present, that so you may form an idea of its future; see what you have to hope for, and what to do, so that by taking good heed to your affairs, you may be among those who shall come forth into the resurrection of life.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider in these words of Christ—"I cannot of Myself do anything,"[6] two lessons which concern you, namely, humility and obedience. Humility, indeed, which should arise in you from the knowledge that by your own strength, without God's constant aid, you can do nothing at all; and obedience, because, bound as you are to God by vow, you should so live as to do nothing of yourself, yea, even to be, as it were, incapable thereof. See

[5] St. John v. 29. [6] St. John v. 30.

therefore how you observe these lessons, and how you should observe them.

2. Consider how the judgment of God in your regard depends on yourself—"As I hear, so I judge, and My judgment is just." He hears therefore not only your words, but also your desires, and your works, which have their voices known to God. Examine therefore these three voices of yours; recognize what judgment God may form thereon, and what you have to do that He may judge you favourably.

3. Consider the duty of a good Religious, signified in Christ's words—"I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." Examine how you are fulfilling this duty, pondering on each of these words; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider for what reasons it becomes you to avoid all self-excuse and defence of your good name with those who live with you, unless justice, or the command of your Superiors, demand it; and apply to yourself, in this sense, these words of Christ—"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true." See whether such be your behaviour, and conform yourself to Christ, Who when accused, defended not Himself.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons you should seek the good opinion of God, that you may be able to say with Christ—"There is another that beareth witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He

witnesseth of Me is true." One among other reasons is, that the witness of men, whether regarding genius, progress in learning and virtue, talents acquired, naturally or otherwise, is too uncertain, too liable to error, to be worthy of your desire. Is not the witness of God, regarding your virtue, more certain and more profitable? Think of this, and see what is most becoming to you.

2. Consider that the best means of pleasing God is by good works—"The works themselves which I do give testimony of Me." Examine your principal actions; their end, their manner of performance, with their other circumstances. See whether they give reason to hope for the favourable testimony of God, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider that to you also are addressed those words of Christ—"Search the Scriptures; . . . and the same are they that give testimony of Me."[7] And reflect on the many advantages derived from the reading and meditation of the holy Scripture, whether for your own instruction and that of others, or the necessary education of the intellect, or again, for various incitements to piety in the heart. See what is your conduct in this respect, and having put away indolence, try to study often and diligently, and with holy affections, the writings of your Lord; Divinely sent to you.

4. Consider whether, and with what affection, you seek Christ; lest, perchance, this saying of His may apply to you—"You will not come to Me, that you may have life."[8] For he who will not imitate the humiliation of Christ, His disregard for self, His shunning of idleness, His labours, persecution,

[7] St. John v. 39. [8] St. John v. 40.

endurance of discomfort, will not come to Him. See if it be so with you, and endeavour by your actions to draw near to Christ.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider how useful and necessary it is that a perfect imitator of Christ should not seek the favour of men, so that he may truly say with Christ—"I receive not glory from men."[9] See if this can be applied to you, and try to conform yourself to Christ.

2. Consider whether or no this reproach of Christ to the Jews applies to you—"I know you, that you have not the love of God in you."[10] This you may discover in two ways—(1) The observance of His precepts; (2) your affection towards Him, whether it be such as you have towards creatures. Meditating on this, excite yourself to an ardent love of God, and if anything has hitherto been wanting to you in this respect, endeavour to acquire it.

3. Consider how foolish, and often hurtful, it is to be one of those to whom these words of Christ may apply—"You receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek." See if you be of this number, and endeavour not to be.

4. Consider that the condition of bad Religious is worse than that of the Jews. For if Christ threatened the latter with the accusation of Moses, because they believed not His teaching, bad Religious have yet more to accuse them; all those, namely, by whose writings, admonitions, and examples, they

[9] St. John v. 41. [10] St. John v. 42

ought to have been roused to show in their actions a lively faith in Christ, and to aim at a perfect imitation of Him. Wherefore, having considered these things, endeavour to have all the masters of Religious life for panegyrists and advocates, and not for your accusers in Heaven.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Monstra Te esse Matrem.

1. Consider the first means whereby the Mother of God can show herself a Mother—namely, by showing herself the Mother of God. This she did, in fact, by bringing Christ forth, and she does it representatively, inasmuch as we celebrate annually the miracle of Christ's Nativity. And because He is to be, by the assuming of our flesh, our Brother and our Redeemer, a Priest satisfying God for us, our Judge, and the Ideal and Model of our life, we should justly desire that the most holy Virgin may bring forth Him from Whom so many blessings come to us, as from our Brother, Redeemer, Priest, Judge, and model of all sanctity. Having dwelt on these titles and offices of Christ, rouse yourself to a longing desire of His spiritual advent.

2. Consider the second means whereby the most Blessed Virgin shows herself a Mother—namely, as our Mother, she loves us as the adopted sons of God, and cherishes us as her own adopted sons. When therefore we pray in this manner that she may be our Mother, we pray that by her prayers and merits she may make us the adopted sons of God; and may preserve us in that adoption, which consists in the

participation of sanctifying grace. Having reflected on the excellence, advantage, and necessity of this adoption for our salvation, acknowledge also what a blessing it is to be the son of such a Mother; ardently desire to be ever the adopted son of God and of this Mother, and do all in your power to attain this blessing.

3. Consider that it is the duty of a Mother to educate and train up her son aright. The Mother of God fulfils both these duties towards those who are worthy, and who cooperate with her education and training. See if you do this, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider that mothers leave a fixed inheritance to good sons, after having educated them and brought them up well. The inheritance we hope for is Heaven. Having pondered on the greatness of this blessing, excite yourself to an ardent desire thereof, with a desire of the means for its acquirement and the removal of obstacles; and ardently beg the Mother of God to help you in all these things, to show herself a Mother to you, and to make you live as becomes the son of such a Father and such a Mother.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the pious affection of the simple crowd, who pressed upon Christ "to hear the word of God."[1] Examine whether you desire with the like affection to hear God's word, in church, at home,

[1] St. Luke v. 1.

and in spiritual reading, and having observed your defects try to avoid them.

2. Consider whether you desire to feed on the Incarnate Word of God in the Eucharist, with the same affection as that which made those crowds desire to hear His voice, created and fashioned by the tongue, when nevertheless you have so many reasons for this eager desire. Be ashamed, mourn, amend.

3. Consider how Christ stood by the lake of Genesareth; then how He went up into Simon's boat. Contemplate the interior acts wherewith His Blessed Soul was occupied, as well as the exterior posture of His Body, and having looked into yourself, try to profit.

4. Consider Christ, having drawn back a little from the shore, teaching the people. Imagine Him teaching you from the sacred pyx and the Eucharist; listen to what He teaches; and how He teaches; and having thanked Him, rouse yourself to obey all His instructions.

MONDAY.

1. Consider in these words of Christ to Simon—"Launch out into the deep,"[2] a mystical admonition from God, exciting you to the highest of perfection, and at the same time reflect on the motives which urge you thereto. See also how you are striving to acquire perfection, and if there be anything wanting, try to supply it.

2. Consider the desire that God has to see us in

[2] St. Luke v. 4.

a high state of perfection. This you may judge by the means which He has given you thereto, whether those common to all, or those peculiar to your Order, especially the Incarnation and Death of Christ your Lord, the Eucharist and the other Sacraments, together with all facility for growth in virtue and the grace of God. From all these gather necessary instructions for the improvement of your life.

3. Consider that the plenitude of apostolic perfection demands of you that you gain others also to Christ, and think that these words are said to you—"Let down your nets for a draught." See how you fulfil this command with regard to those living with you, whom you may gain to Christ, as well as with regard to externs, and if there be any thing to amend, amend it.

4. Consider all men in all conditions of life, how they strive to attain to the perfection of their state, and indeed do attain to it if possible, while you are neglecting a matter of far greater importance. Be thoroughly ashamed, and amend.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider how small is your progress in grace and in the acquirements of virtues whereby you may truly say—"Master I have laboured," not only "all the night," but so many years, "and have taken nothing." Deplore then your negligence, and rouse yourself to progress.

2. Consider the interior causes, whereby for so many years you have made little or no progress, nay,

perhaps are more imperfect than in your novitiate, and having bewailed them, amend.

3. Consider that you can make no progress without the help of God, but that at His word you have to let down the net. Examine then what you have to do, and what to avoid, in order that God may furnish you with effectual aid, and strive to obtain this aid.

4. Consider the charity of Christ's disciples, who being called by their companions to draw the net full of fishes, immediately hastened up and helped, so that two boats were filled with fish. Such is not the conduct of those who shun labour, who give to others the opportunities of hearing confessions and withdraw therefrom themselves, who come not to the assistance of their brethren in need of help. See if you are of this number, and try not to be such.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the reverence displayed towards Christ by St. Peter, who, having beheld the copious draught of fishes taken by the help of Christ's word, fell down at His knees. Here see whether you adore Christ with the same reverent affection and exterior posture as Peter, although you receive daily, yea always, greater benefits from Him than that draught of fishes; and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

2. Consider the humility of Peter, saying—"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Give thanks for this self-abasement; pray him to obtain it for you; and because you are conscious of greater and numerous sins, pray, not indeed that Christ may depart, but that He entering in, your

sins may depart. For having committed them, put yourself under the feet of Lucifer, who has offended his Lord neither so often as you, nor after such blessings as yours.

3. Consider Christ's answer to Peter—"Fear not." Oh, how sweet are these words! Oh, that you were worthy to have them applied to you! See what you should do to be worthy of them, and try to do it.

4. Consider these other words of Christ—"From henceforth thou shalt catch men." Oh, how glorious it is to catch men for Christ! Men for whom He laid down His life, for whom He created Heaven and all things else! See what pains you are taking to catch men for Christ, and endeavour to advance in this work.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the poverty of Christ's disciples, who, "being hungry, began to pluck the ears of corn and eat."[8] No complaint is heard regarding this destitution, no murmur against Christ or any one else. Examine your own behaviour, when there appears to you something wanting, either in the substance, quantity, or quality of your food or drink, see whether you have reached to this poverty of Christ's disciples, and express to God all which a holy affection may suggest, in detestation of your complaining spirit and in amendment of your sensuality.

2. Consider how good it is for us to have food that is scanty and suited to the poor, and encourage yourself to choose it, as far as you can, for your own mode of living.

[8] St. Matt. xii. 1.

3. Consider why Christ, Who had more than once miraculously multiplied bread and fishes to feed the people, would not do it for the sake of His disciples alone, although they had no bread at all; and try to profit by this reflection.

4. Consider how the Pharisees took scandal at this plucking of the ears of corn, as though it was contrary to God's command of observing the Sabbath. Detest this readiness of the Pharisees to take scandal: examine yourself, lest perhaps you also think evil where you have no right to do so; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider in the man with the "withered hand,"[4] the state of one whose works are stained by venial sins, and who rarely produces such as deserve an eternal reward. See if it be so with your hands, and if it is so, deplore this miserable aridity, and seek Christ, your Physician and your health.

2. Consider how great and deplorable are the blindness and folly of that soul which might, by the help of God, perform works worthy of an eternal reward, and yet performs them but seldom, and negligently: just as that beggar would be considered a fool, who would not be rich when he might. Rouse then your soul to a holy avarice; so that in future you may give yourself up entire to the unceasing acquisition and accumulation of merits and rewards.

[4] St. Matt. xii. 10.

3. Consider the causes which prevent you from increasing continually in works worthy of life eternal; and try to remove them.

4. Consider the means which you possess for this continual increase and growth in grace and future glory; see how you are using them, and put away all defects which may be in you.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Sumat per te Preces.

1. Consider how great is the excellence of the Mother of God, Whom we esteem most fit to offer our prayers to the most Holy Trinity. Thus, in the Courts of Kings are those held in highest honour who are believed to have much influence with Kings for obtaining what they ask. And, because the Blessed Virgin has more influence with God than any other Saint, so is it most desirable for us to offer our prayers through her. Congratulate this Blessed Virgin, in that she has such power with God; beg her to use it in your favour; and try to imitate her, that you too may be fit to offer with fruit, both your petition and those of others.

2. Consider the reasons you have for hoping that your prayers are offered to God by His most Holy Mother. Those reasons are—(1) The love of the Blessed Virgin for us, as for sons of God; (2) her love for our Order; (3) her love for many of our brethren, who are very holy, and to whom we are united by the some bond of Religion; (4) her love for Christ's glory, which is extended when our prayers are heard; (5) her conformity to the will of

God, Who wills us to be perfect, and full of the graces which we ask of Him. Therefore with a great confidence of being heard, resolve on those two things—(1) To invoke her often and fervently, begging her to offer your prayers to God; (2) to avoid spoiling your prayers by sin.

3. Consider what is the nature of those prayers which you have desired to have offered to God by the Blessed Virgin—namely, what is their fervour, their object, their diligence, their duration; what the exterior posture and reverence wherewith they are said, and what the custody of your senses. Having observed your defects, put them away.

4. Consider for what reasons the Blessed Virgin offers to God more readily and speedily the prayers of one person than of another; having called to mind examples in the Church, with various other causes, strive to supply such matter to your prayers as may render them very acceptable to the Blessed Virgin and to the most Holy Trinity.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider how very necessary it is to acquire great justice in the sight of God; as Christ says—"I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."[1] Now the Pharisees were esteemed holier than others, were given up to fasting and prayers, and were exact observers of the law. Examine whether and how

[1] St. Matt. v. 20.

far, you surpass them, or rather good seculars, in justice, and try to surpass them.

2. Consider the evil of anger—"Whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment."[2] Examine whether you be angry, from how slight a cause, how often for nothing, and how grievously; and then pondering on the Divine judgment which is reserved for anger, mourn and amend, if you have sinned in this.

3. Consider the evil of insults—"Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca," that is light and inconstant man, "shall be in danger of the council," that is, of the punishment of a more grievous judgment than is due to anger that breaks not forth in words. If then this insult deserves Divine punishment, how much more shall a very grievous and bitter outrage deserve? Examine therefore what is your own conduct in this respect, and if you find any failing, bewail and correct it.

4. Consider the yet more severe punishment of a yet graver insult—"Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Reflect on the severity of this punishment, and the cause whereby it is increased; and see whether you also are liable thereto. This you will perceive by thinking of the nature of your sins. Betake yourself therefore to the fountain of mercy, opened to you by the Priest's hand in the Eucharist. Extinguish there and consume every root of anger, so that no vestige thereof may be seen, and put on the Spirit of Christ, full of sincere charity.

[2] St. Matt. v. 22.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the nature of Divine judgments, whereby not only our anger and insults, but also all our other sins will be judged by Christ. Whence you will learn that that judgment will be more tremendous than the most severe of human judgments. As then you have many, almost innumerable, sins to be weighed in so exact and incorrupt a judgment, see what you have to do during your lifetime, that after death your cause may come to a good issue.

2. Consider that this Divine judgment will not be in private, but in presence of a great assembly of witnesses. The Saints, the Angels will be there, above all, your own conscience, the most faithful witness of all your sins. Consider therefore how you may render these assistants and witnesses favourable to you, and use the means thereto.

3. Consider the end which is to follow on this judgment of sin, namely, a hell of fire, of eternal fire, greater than all the torments of this life, deprived of all consolation, uninterrupted in its fierceness, undiminished in strength by long continuance. Think of all other circumstances that relate to this fire, and see what it behoves you to do in the contemplation thereof, whether with regard to past and present sins, or of future sins.

4. Consider your happiness in being received into an Order most dear to Him Who is to be your Judge, Who has even called you by name into the congregation of His beloved ones. Thank Him for this

blessing; hope great things; but none the less try all you can so to please Him that you may have a joyful sentence in His judgment.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons our Saviour bids us, not to offer our gifts, but to leave them on the altar, until we be reconciled to our offended brother. Try to be the better for this reflection.

2. Consider that Christ our Lord commands us to be reconciled even with him who has something against us, which may happen without any fault of ours; how much more then with him whom we have really offended. Here examine whether you have offended any one, or whether any one through his own fault be offended with you; and do as Christ commands.

3. Consider, practically speaking, what you have to guard against, lest others by their own fault should be offended with you, or lest you should offend others by your own fault. And having well thought over and bewailed these things, avoid them.

4. Consider what you have actually to do to avoid any intentional or unintentional offences on your part. This you will perceive by a consideration (with the imagination and intellect well guarded, lest idle distractions carry them away from the course of the meditation) of everything that has caused past offences, either on your own part, or from others. And having invoked God's help, strive so to live that even the most wicked persons may find no cause for devising offences against you, and thereby offending God.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons Christ, having healed the withered hand, charged those who followed Him "that they should not make Him known." [3] It is a wonderful thing that Christ would not make known His miracles, which nevertheless He performed for the end that He should be acknowledged as the Son of God: the Eternal Father Himself desiring this end, so necessary for the salvation of men and the fulness of the faith which He preached. Compare with this humility of Christ your own conduct. How often do you not seek to be made known to men and to be praised by them for your virtue, learning, experience, or innocence, and what is yet more to be deplored, even what you have not got! Be ashamed, and imitate Christ concealing Himself and His miracles.

2. Consider the object which Christ had in thus concealing Himself—"That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the Prophet, saying, Behold My Servant Whom I have chosen." In which words consider why the Eternal Father calls Christ "chosen servant," and apply them as far as possible to yourself on account of the benefit of your vocation to the Religious state and of your obligations to live as an innocent servant of God. From all these reflections, gather needful instructions.

3. Consider other words of this same Prophet regarding Christ—"My Beloved;" thinking how and why Christ was the Beloved of His Father, and by

[3] St. Matt. xii. 16.

what means you also may be the beloved of the Father; and try to profit by this reflection.

4. Consider other words of this Prophet regarding Christ—"In Whom My Soul hath been well pleased." Here contemplate mentally the pleasure of the Eternal Father in the Soul and Body of Christ and in all His actions; draw out from hence a spiritual relish and sweetness, and burn with a holy jealousy that you may be such in God's sight as to make Him well pleased in you also. See what things are necessary for this end, and try to acquire them.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider how Christ our Lord was filled with the Holy Spirit; and how the Eternal Father says by the same Prophet, "I will put My Spirit upon Him." And again, how fit and worthy He was to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, look at yourself; see how fit and worthy you are to receive the Holy Spirit, and strive to prepare a place for Him.

2. Consider the office given amongst others to Christ by His Father—"He shall show judgment to the Gentiles." See what and how great was the necessity of preaching judgment, as well to the Gentiles as to yourself, and what was the cause thereof. Take pains that this preaching may be salutary and profitable to you.

3. Consider among the praises bestowed on Christ by the Prophet—"He shall not contend." See how and whether you imitate this, and determine what you have to do.

4. Consider that for this also Christ is praised—"He shall not cry out, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish." Behold what little things the Eternal God praises, and how He will even have them mentioned in Scripture. See how you imitate this, and correct what needs correction.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider why Christ commended the custody of the eyes, so that He said,—"If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out."[4] You will perceive the necessity of this custody from the fall of David and of others, to whom you cannot be compared. See what is your conduct in this respect, and what you have to avoid.

2. Consider the reason given by Christ—"For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell." Apply this both to your eyes and your other members, as well as to your sins, sorrow if you find any cause for sorrow and purpose amendment.

3. Consider how greatly to be guarded against are sins which your hands can commit—"If thy right hand scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee." Here examine the sins of your hands, whether in writing what is opposed to charity, or to your vows, or to any of your rules. Deplore them, and amend.

4. Consider in what manner we ought to make our assertions—"I say to you not to swear at all. . . .

[4] St. Matt. v. 29.

But let your speech be yea, yea, no, no; and that which is over and above these, is of evil."[5] See how it is with you in this respect, and if there is anything to correct, correct it.

SATURDAY.

Qui pro nobis Natus.

1. Consider that the Messiah was born for us, first, to be to us the Model of all sanctity. Here reflect on the different ways whereby the Messiah is our Model, how you are making use of this benefit, how you profit by His example, and purpose amendment in some of your principal defects.

2. Consider that the Messiah was born for us, secondly, to redeem us with His own Blood. Here dwell upon the greatness of this benefit, contemplating the greatness of the evil from which He has redeemed us, the impossibility of our escaping this evil by our own strength, the excellence of the life which He by His agonizing death offered, as the price of our redemption, which indeed He need not have offered, if He had been willing to rescue us from our sad condition by freely forgiving our offences, rather than by satisfying God's justice for them.

Give thanks therefore to your Reedeemer, think what you can offer in any way proportionate to this benefit and then offer it to Him. But you can offer nothing more acceptable to Him than your efforts to obtain that for which He redeemed you with His Blood—efforts, namely, to avoid sin, to persevere in

[5] St. Matt. v. 34, 37.

a good life, and to acquire the means necessary thereto.

3. Consider that Christ our Lord was born for us, thirdly, to be our true food, and to feed us with His Body and Blood. Admire this unheard of invention of Divine charity; give thanks for it; try to show yourself to Him as one who in receiving this food will not treat Him unworthily, and so receive Him that this food, which is both God and Man, may display its effects in you. Examine whether you appear like one thus fed, and why not, and apply a remedy.

4. Consider that Christ was born for us, fourthly, that He might be ours in Heaven, and that in two ways: (1) By helping us from thence in our warfare here below, by the bestowal of various gifts, as He helped St. Stephen, St. Paul, and others; (2) in being to us the end and object of our beatitude, while He awaits us there. For this condescension thank Him most tenderly; beg Him to pour out perpetually His gifts upon you, and to take you to Heaven at the proper time. Think over all that you have to do for this end, and put your hand to the work.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the unhappiness of those Religious to whom figuratively may be applied the words spoken literally regarding the crowds that remained with Jesus—"They had nothing to eat."[1] Such are those who in religion employ their thoughts, desires,

[1] St. Mark viii. 1.

joys, words, and actions upon worldly matters, belonging in no wise to increase of grace and glory, yea, often hindering it, as though they had no spiritual and Divine food wherewith to nourish themselves. Examine if you are of this number; if not, thank God; if otherwise, purpose serious amendment.

2. Consider the mercy of Christ our Lord, Who, without even being asked, having seen the needs of the multitude, called His disciples to Him and said —"I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat." Thank your Lord for this compassion; adore His most Holy Heart, full of such great charity; and think how good and profitable it is to remain with Christ for a few days. Confirm yourself then in your vocation, wherein you will remain so many years with Christ, and trust that His mercy will never fail you, unless you hinder it by your sins.

3. Consider the holy affection of Christ towards us, as He remains in the Eucharist. For those who are attached to the most Holy Eucharist, and like the pious multitude remain with Christ for some hours on appointed days, without doubt will experience His mercy, because He forsakes not those who seek Him. See if you are of this number, and if perhaps you remain with Him only to offend Him, to be tepid, to be careless, correct what is amiss.

4. Consider how necessary is the most Holy Eucharist, as signified in these words of Christ taken spiritually—"If I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way." Thus do many faint who so receive the Eucharist as though

they received It not, because they scarcely feel Its effects. Examine how you receive It, with what fruit, whether you experience improvement every year; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

MONDAY.

1. Consider that these words of Christ apply to many amongst us—"Some of them," that is, of those who had remained with Christ for three days, "came from afar off." For some were far off from Christ, the author and model of the Religious state, by reason of their state of life in the world; others, besides their state of life, were afar off on account of mortal sins committed in the world. Think over your former long distance from Christ; deplore it; give thanks because you, who "sometime were afar off," as says the Apostle, "are made nigh,"[2] and pray that also, by increase in sanctity and glory, you may be near Christ your Lord in Heaven.

2. Consider how these words of the disciples apply to those living in the world—"From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness?" For there is nothing in the world, or belonging thereto, that can satiate our souls. Here, no worldling is content with his honours, his pleasures, or his riches. Detest therefore the splendid misery of the world. Thank your Lord, Who has chosen you to be amongst His own. Beg for perseverance, cooperate with the grace of God, and try always to fulfil your Religious obligation, which is no other than to live holily.

[2] Ephes. ii. 13.

3. Consider these words of Christ as said to us—"How many loaves have ye?" and answer with the disciples, "Seven," that is, the Sacraments. Think what multiplied graces God has given therein to His Spouse the Church, and thank Him. See how you draw them out from these Sacraments, so adapted to your condition. Be ashamed that you draw so scantily, and amend.

4. Consider the kindness of Jesus, Who, being about to revive the multitude with food miraculously prepared, wishes them to receive it with comfort, and therefore gave it not to them while walking or standing, but commanded them "to sit down upon the ground." Here contemplate with filial affection the merciful Heart of your Lord. Give thanks for this charity; adore this paternal tenderness. And see what you have to hope for from Him, when He is so solicitous about the lawful comforts of His children; only take heed to make yourself worthy of His kindness by a good life, and exercise a like charity towards your neighbour.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider how Christ handled the loaves and fishes while distributing them to the multitude; and learn how to behave at your repasts, and what faults to avoid; which faults, having called to mind, be ashamed, and avoid them.

2. Consider how Christ our Lord gave thanks when about to distribute this food—namely, with what interior sentiments, and what posture outwardly; and try to profit by the reflection.

3. Consider the frugality of the multitude, who were in number about four thousand, and who consumed not all that was given to them, but left seven baskets full of fragments out of seven loaves and fishes. Weigh well these things, and turn them to your instruction.

4. Consider why no mention is made of Christ and His Apostles having eaten anything, but only of the distribution of loaves and fishes; also, why there is no mention of the drinking even of water. Because this is not without a mystery, search into it; turn it to the reformation of your life, and to the study of mortification, which is more agreeable to God than the ignorant believe. Mortify your thirst and your daintiness with regard to the quality of your drink.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons Christ, when about to feed the multitude, furnished them only with loaves and fishes, and not with meat, or any other provisions or delicacies; and hence learn to admire the great wisdom of all the eminent Saints in avoiding the pleasures of taste. See what is your own conduct in this respect, and resolve on what you should do in order not to be a degenerate follower of the Saints.

2. Consider for what reasons both Christ our Lord and His servants and serious imitators, avoided thus ingeniously and studiously all delights of taste, whether in quantity, quality, or duration of time in the use of food and drink. Having put away your defects in this matter, imagine yourself looking at

Christ suffering thirst; and see what you should offer to Him thus thirsting, so as to be conformed to His example.

3. Consider for what reasons Christ distributed the loaves and fishes to the multitude through His disciples, and not directly from Himself. Thus indeed He will have men to depend on men; thus He establishes the authority of Superiors, and by them, not immediately by Himself, will have us instructed. Learn then in what esteem they are to be held, to whom God has committed His own office.

4. Consider the model of evangelical poverty, as exhibited in that multitude, after their hunger had been satisfied. They left none of the fragments that remained, but filled and took up seven basketsful. Learn hence what you should do in the house of Christ our Lord; learn not to throw away small things which appear like fragments, but to treat them with pious affection, as things dear to our Lord; and endeavour not to destroy His sacred property, but to preserve it uninjured. See whether you do this, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the patience which Christ our Lord demands from His own—"If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other."[3] If Christ demands this from persons in the world, how much more from you? Call to memory now all your injuries; you will find them to be less than this. Why then do you not bear them with that spirit

[3] St. Matt. v. 39.

which becomes a Christian, not to say a Religious? Be ashamed, you despiser of the world in name only, and endure trials with an even mind.

2. Consider that Christ does not limit this patience to the endurance of merited suffering; but will absolutely have you bear injuries arising from no fault or cause of yours. See how you do this, and seek those reasons which will persuade you of your duty to bear everything, even things which seem undeserved; for they never befall you without some cause, known at least to God, through some real fault of yours, which God in His just judgment intends to punish.

3. Consider how Christ will have our hearts removed from the use and possession of things—"If a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away your coat, let go your cloak also unto him." Examine here your affection for the things which you use, and which, if not obtained against your Rules, are yet superfluous, and obtained under a false pretext of necessity. And see how you, bound with a vow of poverty, imitator of the poverty of Christ our Lord, ought to dwell in the house of poverty.

4. Consider how greatly your Lord God recommends charity to His children, in helping our neighbour who is in need of us—"Whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two." Learn hence how you should help your brother by your labours. See what is your conduct to your fellow-member. Oh, that you may help your head—that is, your Order—or your Superior, when he demands your work, instead of urging so many frivolous excuses, condemned by God's just judgment.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider for what reason we should, as Christ commands us, love our enemies, namely, after the example of God and Christ our Lord, and of His Saints; on account of God's will, &c., and inflame yourself to this heroic love.

2. Consider wherein this interior love of our enemies consists. Which you will perceive by thinking of those things in which we show our love for our friends and those who are dear to us. See whether there be in you a similar love for your enemies; if not, blush, mourn, and purpose amendment.

3. Consider the exterior effects of interior love—"Do good to them that hate you."[4] Consider what it is to do good, by what means it may, and ought, to be done; and try to carry out this rule in your life, especially with respect to those who live with you.

4. Consider that you should show these signs of interior affection, particularly towards those who are most opposed to you. Such are they of whom our Lord says—"Pray for them that persecute and calumniate you." For calumny disturbs more than anything else, those spiritual men who are not mortified. Reflect what a great blessing this is from our Lord God; burn with the desire thereof; and resolve to entertain a great affection of charity towards those who persecute and calumniate you.

[4] St. Matt. v. 44.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Tulit esse Tuus.

1. Consider the first manner wherein Christ belonged to the Blessed Virgin. He was her true Son, according to nature; formed of her purest blood, by the power of the Holy Spirit; conceived as to His Body without the operation of man, and hence entirely hers, owing nothing to an earthly father. Congratulate her upon such a Son. Think how great is this her happiness, and beg of her to make Him yours as far as can be.

2. Consider the second manner wherein Christ belonged to the most Blessed Virgin, namely, by justifying grace; whereby He was always hers. For there was never one moment of time when Christ belonged not to the Blessed Virgin; since at no time whatsoever was she in mortal sin, whereby Christ ceases to be ours. Here congratulate the most holy Virgin; give thanks to the most Blessed Trinity for the blessing conferred upon her, and think with grief and shame how often Christ has not been yours, perhaps even in Religion, as many times, namely, as you have expelled Him from your soul by some mortal sin. Bewail this, and beg that for the future He may always be in this manner yours by grace.

3. Consider the third manner wherein Christ belonged to the most Blessed Virgin, namely, by similitude of life, for there has never been so much similarity between any mere creatures as there was between Christ our Lord and His Mother; whether with regard to freedom from sin, or habits of virtue

infused or acquired, or acts of virtue, or repression of the source of sin, with freedom from every inordinate motion. Having thought over these perfections, compare your life with that of the most holy Mother; blush, mourn over your own life, and rouse yourself to as great a similarity as possible to her, through God's grace, and by sanctity of life.

4. Consider the fourth manner wherein Christ belongs to the most Blessed Virgin, namely, similarity of worship. For in the Catholic Church no mere rational creature has been so much worshipped by the Faithful, or with such a worship of hyperdulia as the Mother of God, on account of the perfections and graces inherent in her, the gifts of her Son. Excite in yourself a great joy at this worship of her through the whole earth; join yourself in spirit with all her worshippers, all over the world, and beg the most Blessed Mother to make you dear to her Son by grace, and by all His gifts, so that at length in honour He may deign to be yours.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider who are the false prophets, "who come in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves," [1] those, namely, who outwardly appear good, and are esteemed good, but interiorly are not such as they appear. See if you be of this number: if so, examine into the causes and strive to remove them.

2. Consider the sure sign whereby to recognize men—"By their fruits you shall know them." The

[1] St. Matt. vii. 15.

fruits are our words and deeds; and by these others know us. Examine into your fruits, and see if by them you may be known as a good Religious. If they are evil, it is through your own fault: for you have every grace to make them good. Be ashamed therefore, and amend.

3. Consider how much joy you may offer to your Lord, if, resembling as you do, thorns and thistles, you bring forth nevertheless the sweet fruits of good works, like to grapes and figs. Compassionate your Lord, for Whom, as the Prophet says, "there is no cluster to eat,"[2] and inasmuch as there is a great dearth of perfect souls, do you burn with an ardent desire of great perfection, that thus you may satisfy the hunger and thirst of your Lord.

4. Consider the manifold power of the Holy Eucharist, worthily received, to bring forth good fruit, even in those who hitherto have lived and grown like thorns and thistles in the garden of God our Lord. Why therefore, although receiving It so often, do you not bear fruit proportioned to the sap and rain of the heavenly Eucharist? Search into the causes, and amend.

MONDAY.

1. Consider whether you deserve to be called a good or a bad tree in the garden of Christ—"Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; and this is the first sign of a good or bad tree, namely, its fruit. Examine your interior powers, your senses, the members of your body, and their fruits; and you shall perceive what name you merit.

[2] Mich. vii. 1.

2. Consider that for the perfection of a tree it is not enough that the fruit be good; there must be also as it were a moral incapacity to produce bad fruit—"A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." Such an incapacity was there in the most chaste Joseph, who, when tempted by a wicked woman to sin, replied—"How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"[8] See if you be steadfast like him in good, and consider how to become so.

3. Consider the danger of those who, even if they be not bad, are yet sterile in good—"Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire." Think how great is this evil, and strive to remove it far from you.

4. Consider these words of Christ, and gather from them the spiritual fruit which they require of you—"Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the great praise bestowed on those who love their enemies and do good to them, for such are made sons of God—"That you may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven." How great is this dignity you may perceive from reflecting on the sons of a King, or any other potentate, and on the privileges enjoyed by the sons of great men by reason of their sonship. Kindle therefore within you a great desire of loving your enemies, that so you may be a son of God.

[8] Gen. xxxix. 9.

2. Consider the first manner in which we ought to show our love for our enemies. It is expressed in the similitude of the sun, which "the Heavenly Father maketh to rise upon the good and bad." That which the rising sun offers to all, you should offer, whether to your friends or your enemies. Consider what that is; apply it to yourself; if you fail in this resemblance, be sorry for it, and endeavour to attain to it.

3. Consider the second manner of showing love to our enemies, taught by Christ in another similitude —"And raineth upon the just and the unjust."[4] So should you give to both friends and enemies, what the rain gives in moistening and watering the earth. Consider what that is, whether you give it or not, and endeavour to give it.

4. Consider why we should not be content with loving only our friends—"The publicans and heathens do this," even they love and greet their friends. Hence learn, that what worldlings do you should do, nay indeed much more, and with greater perfection. See how it is with you, and strive to surpass them in every good work and act of virtue.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the great love of Christ towards us in desiring that we should be perfect—"As your Heavenly Father is perfect."[5] This you may comprehend, by considering how great would be the love of a king, who should wish his subjects to be as rich, powerful, and as happy as himself. Ponder upon

[4] St. Matt. v. 45. [5] St. Matt. v. 48.

this; return thanks; admire His goodness; and aspire to the grace which He offers you.

2. Consider the first perfection of God in which you may imitate Him—namely, His impeccability. This cannot be imitated fully; but in these ways: (1) That you should sin but rarely, and then in a very slight degree; (2) that you should so abhor grave sins, as to be morally speaking incapable of sin, in the sense of St. John's words—"Whosoever is born of God, committeth not sin, and he cannot sin."[6] See whether you have this perfection; if not, humble yourself, and excite yourself by many motives to desire and obtain it.

3. Consider the second perfection of our Lord God, in which you may imitate Him—namely, His rectitude in all His works: He does all things rightly and holily. See how it is with your actions, and correct what is amiss.

4. Consider the third perfection wherein God may be imitated; namely, the perpetual contemplation and love of His Divinity. Consider how far these flourish in thee, and how far they can flourish in this present life, and strive to attain to them.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the fourth perfection of God—namely, the fruitfulness and efficacy of all His interior and exterior works. They are neither sterile nor void, but fruitful. By His knowledge, God the Father produces the Eternal Word: united with the Son into as it were one productive principle, He produces, by

[6] 1 St. John iii. 9.

love, the Holy Ghost: all things external to Himself, He produces by His own will. This you will imitate, if your good resolutions be not sterile, but joined to prompt execution; also if your words benefit your hearers, if your actions are profitable to the Community, and consume no time in vain. See if it be so with you, and correct what is amiss.

2. Consider the fifth perfection of God, worthy of your imitation—namely, His perpetual interior peace, which cannot be diminished either by the sins of others, or by His own passions (which exist not in Him). Compare yourself with Him; humble yourself, and aspire to a similar peace of mind.

3. Consider the sixth perfection of God—namely, stability in His absolute decrees, with total independence of the cooperation of others. How often do you change your well and justly determined plans at the approach of some temptation or disturbance, and withdraw from your good resolutions? Consider how shameful, how injurious, how offensive to God is such conduct, and use your best endeavours to avoid it.

4. Consider the seventh perfection of God to be imitated—namely, the most perfect end which He has in view, in each and every one of His works. That end is Himself and His own glory. See if such be the end of your actions; how many of them are thrown away, on account of a wrong intention; and endeavour to amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the eighth perfection of God to be imitated—namely, the attention He bestows on all His works; giving as much to one, as though He

had that work only to occupy Him. Admire this capacity of the Divine intellect, and proceed cautiously in all your actions; knowing that God sees perfectly all that you are doing. Imitate Him also, by performing your duties of the active life in such a manner that they may in no wise injure the contemplative life; and those of the contemplative life so that they may not injure the active. See what is your conduct, and endeavour to make it such as this.

2. Consider the ninth perfection of God to be imitated—namely, His supreme rectitude in qualities opposite to each other. For although He is infinitely just, yet He is also infinitely merciful and gracious; His mercy hinders not His justice, nor His justice, His mercy; for He does all things most justly, and treats all according to their merits. You will imitate Him in this, if your affections pervert not your judgment; if your love for any one hinder not a just severity, and cause no offences to God through human respect. Examine yourself on this point, and correct what is amiss.

3. Consider the tenth perfection of God, to be imitated—namely, the right use of things that are evil; He permits even the commission of sins, and this for a good end. For He makes them the means of converting souls; giving occasion for grief, humility, and caution; and affording to Himself the opportunity of displaying His mercy in their remission, or His justice in their punishment. You also should turn all the evil of guilt and punishment to the glory of God. Examine how you may put this into practice, and endeavour to do so.

4. Consider the eleventh perfection of God to be imitated—namely, the natural and supernatural love

of His enemies, which He shows forth by many benefits, in various ways. Consider how you are bound to imitate Him in this, and having bewailed your defects, conform yourself to your Lord.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Virgo Singularis.

1. Consider that Mary is called *Singularis*, or singular, because she was the first who vowed her virginity to God. Reflect upon her excellence, whether by reason of her vow, or because she was the first who made it, or because she observed it more perfectly than any other creature; and recognize your own happiness in being called to a state wherein you are bound to chastity. Return thanks to God, beg for grace to observe this vow, and see if there be nothing which you should put away from yourself.

2. Consider that Mary was singular in the privilege of her maternity without the loss of her virginal integrity. Congratulate the Blessed Virgin on this prerogative, greater than many other miracles of grace as well as of nature; and at the same time ponder on the remark of St. Augustine, that it is more blessed to obey the commandments of God than to be the Mother of God. Recognize therefore your own happiness, since this, with the help of God, you can do. Congratulate Mary on the possession of this two-fold happiness; beg her to be your Mother by adoption. See what is needful for this end, and strive to obtain it.

3. Consider that Mary is called Singular, because she cultivated the grace of virginity with singular perfection. She was free from all impure thoughts and temptations, and still more from the slightest defect contrary to chastity, the love of which was inspired by her very look. Ponder upon this, and applying it all to yourself, draw out some pious affections.

4. Consider that Mary is called the Singular Virgin, because in her singular virginity and maternity she brought forth a singular Son, that is, a Son better, more worthy, more powerful than any son that ever was born. Hence you will entertain a great confidence of obtaining the manifold aids of God, through this Son, by the intercession of your Mother. For what will a son deny to the request of his most dear mother? Only take care to be very dear to this Mother, who will without a doubt obtain for you many things from her Son. Examine therefore how you may make this Mother very favourable to you, so as to be replenished with innumerable gifts from her Son.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider yourself as the steward of God, to Whom you must "give an account of thy stewardship."[1] For to you in the first place is committed the dispensation of natural gifts, appertaining to your body and mind, your members, senses, and powers. Examine how you have hitherto dispensed these gifts, whether according to God's will, or the contrary; and

[1] St. Luke xvi. 2.

finding yourself to be unfaithful in many things, be sorry, beg pardon, and amend.

2. Consider how you have dispensed the supernatural gifts which have been infused into your soul by Baptism and the other Sacraments, and by the merit of good works, namely, the habits of the theological and moral virtues. As in the first point, bewail any errors you have committed, and amend.

3. Consider how you have dispensed those gifts that are exterior; whether natural, such as creatures, whose use is either permitted or forbidden you; or supernatural, such as good examples, trials, manifold benefits, the Sacraments, Indulgences, admonitions, sermons, spiritual readings, and the like. Bewail once more any shortcomings; beg pardon, and, amend.

4. Consider what use you have made of the benefit of the Holy Eucharist, and how you have received It; or if a Priest, how you have dispensed It to others, with what devotion, and with what fruit. Think over this as in the first point, and turn it to your spiritual profit.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which God is justly called "a rich man," for He possesses in Himself all the riches of this world, in an infinitely great degree and without any imperfection. Hence it follows that you should more ardently seek God than the riches of this world. See if you do this, be ashamed, and amend.

2. Consider the second reason for which our Lord may truly be called "a rich man," for He, namely,

is the fountain from whence flow into others all the goods of this life; whence it follows that you should be more ambitious of His favour than of the favours of those from whom you hope some good thing. See if you are so, and endeavour to make progress.

3. Consider the third reason for which your Lord is truly "a rich man." He alone cannot be poor; He alone, in enriching others, loses nothing, which cannot be said even of the richest of human beings. Hence it follows that you are happy in having such a Lord as no worldling has amongst earthly Kings. See therefore whether you serve your Lord as faithfully and assiduously as men of the world, being allured by the hope of riches and rewards, serve their lords, and determine what you have to do in this Divine service.

4. Consider the fourth reason for which our Lord has the best right to be called rich; since indeed all His creatures, even sins themselves, whose author He is not, can enrich a man, if he will rightly use all created things, shun all occasions and temptations to sin, and take from them opportunities for just grief, penitence, satisfaction, amendment, &c. Examine therefore how you make use of these, and consider practically what you should do in order, for the honour of your Lord, to grow rich in His Court.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider how careful we ought to be lest we be accused before God as that steward in the Gospel was accused unto his lord, "that he had wasted his goods." For whatever there may be to fear from

accusations made before men, there must be a great deal more to fear from accusations before God. Here consider how greatly you shun the censure of men, and how sensitive you are thereto; not so do you shun the censure of God. Be ashamed, acknowledge your folly, and amend.

2. Consider what is the judgment of your Lord concerning you, lest perhaps you be one of those to whom may apply these words—"How is it that I hear this of thee?" You will know this judgment of God regarding you by your manner of life, to which Eternal Truth, habitually conformable to its object, adapts itself. Therefore if you hope for a favourable judgment on yourself, give thanks; if otherwise, beg pardon, and amend.

3. Consider with what care you should perform all your works, for before each one of them you should imagine these words pronounced—"Give an account of thy stewardship." So should you live, as if after each action you were to die, and to give an account of your stewardship. See what is your conduct, and endeavour to profit.

4. Consider the uncertain duration of life, for always while in health we may fear lest it befall us to hear that sentence—"Now thou canst be steward no longer." Why then delay necessary penance and amendment? Think of these things, and form yourself to such a life that any moment you may be prepared to die, without external helps. Consider how profitable this is, and apply yourself to the work.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider by what means you may escape condemnation in God's judgment—"What shall I do, because my lord taketh from me the stewardship?" Employ these means in good time, so as to prevent the judgment of God.

2. Consider two obstacles which prevent God our Judge from being as favourable to us as He might be, namely, shrinking from work, especially difficult work, in the service of God, or loss of time in idle occupations; and the desire of esteem and honour, as expressed in this sentence—"To dig I am not able, to beg I am ashamed." See if you have these two impediments in you, and, if so, deplore them, and amend.

3. Consider the various creditors whom you have to satisfy, lest you suffer anything in the judgment of God. These are, God Himself, those whom you have injured by bad advice or example, your own conscience, your Order if it have ever been evil spoken of through your fault, your body which you have soiled by sins, your soul stained in like manner, the Angels, your Patron Saints whom you have grieved. See therefore how you should satisfy these creditors, and begin at once.

4. Consider wherein "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light," whether in averting misfortunes, or in acquiring good things. Let their example fill you with shame, and rouse yourself to a like diligence in all that concerns the increase of grace and glory.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons the wicked are called "children of this world," and the just "children of light," and endeavour to profit by the reflection.

2. Consider the causes which ought to make you wiser than the children of this world in their generation, and rouse yourself to a vehement desire of acquiring and displaying in your actions this prudence of the Saints.

3. Consider the first manner wherein is displayed the wisdom of the children of the world. All their interior powers and exterior acts are employed in seeking, preserving, and increasing the goods of this world, that is, riches, honours, comforts, pleasures, &c. See if you are like to them in seeking, preserving, and increasing the gifts of grace and glory. Be ashamed, and amend.

4. Consider the second manner wherein is displayed the wisdom of the children of this world. They pant after the goods of this world with the greatest affection, with indefatigable toil and effort, enduring the most severe and dangerous trials, as may be seen in their artizans, sailors, merchants, soldiers, and courtiers. And you! See whether you take the same pains, by labour, endurance of suffering, &c., for those things to which an eternal reward is promised. Be thoroughly ashamed, and excite yourself to increased fervour.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider for what reasons the riches of this world are called "the mammon of iniquity."[2] Because they are for the most part unjustly acquired, or because they prepare the way for iniquity; or because they are greatly esteemed by the unjust, not by the just, and preferred to heavenly things; or because they are a sort of injustice, for though God made them for all, yet one has them, another has not, so that one is in affluence, another in poverty. Having reflected on all this, excite in yourself a hatred of riches; thank God for the life of poverty to which you are called, and resolve to abide therein till death.

2. Consider the first means whereby you may render the mammon of iniquity useful to you, namely, by almsdeeds. These you have given in a greater degree than others in this world, since you have given everything to Christ our Lord, for Whom you have relinquished all that you have or could have. Give thanks for this benefit, and see whether hitherto, in the house of poverty, there has been in you any affection towards the things you have left. Examine yourself, and if there be anything of this sort, cut it off as soon as possible.

3. Consider the second means whereby you may render the mammon of iniquity useful to you, namely, by shunning the comforts of the world, which this mammon usually provides in food, clothing, habitation, idleness, pleasures of the senses, &c. Here

[2] St. Luke xvi. 4.

think on the examples of the Saints in this respect, and having bewailed the dissimilarity of your own life, conform yourself to their poverty, and to that of Christ Himself.

4. Consider the third means whereby the mammon of iniquity may be useful to you, namely, if you can by word, example, prayer, and merits, cooperate in the conversion of the rich of this world, whether to the Religious state, or to the right use of riches in the world. And to this you are called in the Society. See therefore what you have to do, now and in its proper time; and that you may be useful to the Society in this respect, prepare all that is needful to fit you for this duty.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Inter omnes Mitis.

1. Consider that the Blessed Virgin was most gentle in heart and soul, for she had no thoughts or affections of her will contrary to meekness, since by a special privilege of God, the source of concupiscence in her was under perfect control, and therefore suffered no inordinate motions opposed to reason. Contemplate mentally the tranquillity of this most gentle virginal soul; admire it; praise it; thank God Who gave her so rare a privilege; and beg her to obtain for you also this tranquillity of a most meek soul.

2. Consider the interior motions of the mind, contrary to meekness, which you experience so often in your thoughts and in the acts of your will, which are opposed to reason, whereby you are agitated like

the waves of a troubled sea. See the effects of original sin, and then the remains of your depraved acts and habits; blush because they often rise up without any true cause or for a trifling cause; and having observed the principal occasions of such motions, prepare yourself for them, that when they rise you may repress them, and as far as possible prevent them from rising.

3. Consider how the Blessed Virgin was gentlest of the gentle in her words. She never uttered one word contrary to meekness, nay, she suffered not anything hasty even in the modulation or tone of her voice. Compare the impetuosity and acrimony of your words with the meekness of the Blessed Virgin; be ashamed; acknowledge how unbecoming they are in a man who is seeking sanctity, and amend.

4. Consider how the Blessed Virgin was gentlest of the gentle in her works. She never did aught that savoured not of meekness. Compare with hers your own far different actions, and try to conform them to a similitude with your most benignant Mother and Mistress.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider Jesus approaching Jerusalem, "Who seeing the city, wept over it."[1] Compassionate Him weeping, and admire the tenderness of His pity, which at the apprehension of coming evils, caused in Him these tears. On the other hand, see with how great cause Christ our Lord, if He could now weep, would weep over you, namely, on account of

[1] St. Luke xix. 41.

your sins in the world, your sins in your present state, especially your relapses into them, together with the little heed you pay to small falls, and your ingratitude to God for so many benefits.

2. Consider the chief cause of Christ's tears. He wept, namely, because that city had not known the grace which our Lord had offered to it by His teaching, from which it turned away, as well as from the good gifts which faith would have brought to it. Here deplore with a great pity the blindness of so many heretical cities, which have rejected Catholic doctrine, and with it all the other graces inclosed within the bosom of the true Church. Pray therefore with your whole soul to the Eternal Father, that they may know the time of His visitation.

3. Consider whether you are one of those who know not the time of our Lord's visitation, when, that is to say, by inward lights, the motions of the will, together with outward admonitions, examples, punishments, and blessings, they are visited by our Lord, to the end that they may purge themselves from their defects, and replenish themselves with graces. Having bewailed your defects, purpose amendment.

4. Consider Christ our Lord in the Eucharist, as weeping often (in a spiritual sense) over the sins which are committed in the bad use of this Sacrament. Do you also mourn for the same cause? Examine whether, perhaps, you also by your distractions, irreverence, sleepiness, negligence, or dryness, may not often offend Him and give Him cause for tears. Therefore beg pardon, and amend.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the zeal of Christ our Lord, Who, although He was most gentle, "quenching not the smoking flax, and breaking not the bruised reed," nevertheless, "entering into the Temple, began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought."[2] Learn hence how, without violating charity, you should oppose those whom you see not to be living rightly, and how you should not conceal those sins of theirs which you are able to correct. See whether you do this, and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the manner in which He expelled these buyers and sellers—"He began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves."[3] Whereby foolish critics might have considered Him guilty of grievous anger and impatience. Learn hence not to be scandalized, but to put a favourable interpretation on all things; and see what your conduct is in this respect.

3. Consider the reverence wherewith our Lord would have His Temple treated, when "He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple."[4] Think over this, and see how greatly to be avoided are those more serious offences which are sometimes committed by you in the temple; and if you discover any such in you, bewail and avoid them.

4. Consider the words of Christ—"My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations."[5] And

[2] St. Mark xi. 16.
[3] St. Luke xix. 45.
[4] St. Mark xi. 15.
[5] St. Mark xi. 17.

if to all nations, how much more to all Religious, who are called to the worship of God. See whether the temple of the Lord, better than that of Solomon, be to you the house of prayer; and correct what needs correction.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which your life in Religion should be such that it may justly be called on your own part "the house of prayer;" on account namely of those sins which you have committed in the world, which you know more clearly in Religion, and for the purging whereof by satisfaction and earnest prayer you are called into Religion. See what is your conduct in this respect, and make this house into a house of prayer.

2. Consider the second reason for this: the natural benefits which you appreciate in Religion, and which you receive in greater abundance than the Kings of this world. Such are at least tranquillity of life, freedom from solicitudes, cares, anxieties, excessive fears, &c.; better nights, more joyful days, a health less disturbed by superfluous eating and drinking, and other things of the same kind. Pondering on this, recognize your manifold benefits; pour out perpetual thanksgiving, and make this house a house of prayer.

3. Consider the third reason for this: the supernatural benefits which are received more frequently, more copiously, and in greater excellence here than in the world. Think over the chief of these benefits, and on their account so live that, by praising your

Lord God for them, you may truly make this house a house of prayer.

4. Consider the fourth reason for this: the scarcity of men who by a good life in the world, which is as it were a practical prayer, are praising God. Compassionate your Lord, because He has so few followers; grieve that the devil has more followers in the world, and rouse yourself to so fervent and holy a life as may in some measure compensate for the sins of others, and by the perfection of your own life make this house the house of prayer.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider that they make the temples of God into dens of thieves, who betake themselves to the temple after the commission of robbery, as thieves betake themselves to their dens; and see whether this may not apply to you. It does apply if you have ever injured by your tongue the good fame of your neighbour; for a good name is better than great riches, says the Wise Man.[6] To take away a good name is worse than to take away money. Bewail then these sins of your own tongue, and of the tongues of others, and avoid them for the future.

2. Consider, secondly, that they also make the temples into dens of thieves who betake themselves to the temples after murder, as thieves to their caves. This would apply to those who go to the temples after the commission of any mortal sin, although by going thither they do not sin, and although they ought to go; for Christ is crucified by any mortal sin

[6] Prov. xxii. 1.

whatsoever. If you are conscious of any such, be ashamed, bewail it, beg pardon, and make due satisfaction.

3. Consider, thirdly, that they also make the temples into dens of thieves who are tortured by anguish of conscience for sins committed and not corrected, or for which they have not truly satisfied; for such a state of mind is the state of thieves in their dens. This applies to you if your conscience stings you, either for confessions which you know to be badly made, or for the want of such amendment as brings joy and peace of mind. See therefore what you have to do, lest you pray in the temple with such anguish of mind.

4. Consider how great a sin is irreverence in the temple, even in things so necessary for the service of the Temple and for the sacrifices as that selling and buying of doves; seeing that Christ our Lord compared it to theft. And is not your irreverence more grievous, when your senses or your mind are occupied in the temple by unnecessary things; when you speak to God in such a manner and with such distractions as you would not speak to your adversary when disputing with him; when you receive Him into your heart as you would not receive any noble person whatsoever who came to see you on business? If you have these faults, blush, mourn, and propose a serious amendment.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the mischief of vainglory—"Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them: otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father Who is in Heaven."[7] This loss is greater than the loss of any temporal good, hoped for but not acquired, because it is the loss of supreme and eternal good. As therefore men grieve vehemently for losing an opportunity of great gain, see how much more you should grieve for losing an opportunity of eternal gain. Examine whether you care for this, and see how greatly you should avoid vanity.

2. Consider the right end at which you should aim in your indifferent occupations, such as your studies, lectures, reading, &c. For if good and supernatural works avail not when done for a vain end, much less do those works avail whose nature is not supernatural. Examine therefore how you perform them, and correct what needs correction. Consider the end a right one, if you occupy yourself as diligently with them when you are not to appear in public, as when you have to display your knowledge before others.

3. Consider the reason why Heaven's prize is called a reward, and learn hence how perfect your works ought to be in order to deserve such a return as may be called a reward.

4. Consider why vain boasting is compared by Christ our Lord to a trumpet. One of the reasons may be because, as in a trumpet, the sound takes its

[7] St. Matt. vi. 1.

beginning from a small aperture, and spreads and passes out through a large one, so a vain rumour is in general widely spread from an insignificant cause. Learn hence to avoid the smallest signs of vanity. See whether you do this, and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the first motive for doing all our actions well and for a good end—"Thy Father seeth in secret."[8] For the eye of God, benignantly looking upon him who does well, is sufficient, without any other reward, to excite us to the constant endeavour of doing well. Think with pious affection how efficacious is this motive, especially in the heart of a son, which your heart should be. See whether you are moved by this, and try to make progress.

2. Consider the second motive, a heavenly reward —"Thy Father will repay thee." He will repay the perfect, Who even to the unworthy gives true gifts; He Who in giving loses nothing, Who though always giving is as full of gifts as if He had given nothing, because His treasures are infinite. On the other hand see how, for a less reward, for applause, for sensuality, for some baneful pleasure, you do what you should not do, shun what you should not shun, and omit what you should not omit. Recognize how unbecoming this is, and take heed lest you prefer pernicious human rewards to those which are Divine and most profitable.

[8] St. Matt. vi. 18.

3. Consider the manner wherein your Father recompenses good deeds—"He will repay thee." As though He said, Those actions, which for God's sake are done well, are lent to God; they are not lost, they are repaid even in this life, either equivalently or better, or by other things far more excellent. In return for dainty food, so to speak, of which, for God's sake, we deprive ourselves in the mortification of the palate, God refreshes us with a greater pleasure, both in prayer and elsewhere. Why therefore are we stingy with God, why do we grudge ourselves His greater gifts? Awake and make use of so great an opportunity of sowing in the fruitful hand of God innumerable fruits.

4. Consider whom your Father repays—you, who deserve nothing at all, or rather, who deserve all evil on account of your sins; you, who are bound by so many reasons to serve God without hope of reward. And yet your merciful Father will repay you even for a sigh. Thank your bountiful Remunerator; beg that He may always work in you and through you such works as are worthy of reward; and desire this, not so much for your own good as for His glory.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Nos Culpis Solutos.

1. Consider that our sins are as it were the chains of the devil. Because mortal sins so bind us, that we become his slaves, whom the Lord God excludes from grace and glory. Think what an immense evil this is, having compared it with temporal evils, so

very much less grievous. With a most generous mind, resolve rather to die than to offend your Lord God by any mortal sin, and if you are contaminated by any, mourn, beg pardon of God, and ask the Blessed Virgin to break these your fetters.

2. Consider that your venial sins are also like chains with respect to the gifts of God, preventing you from receiving them just as though you were bound; or at least preventing you from deriving from them as much as you might! so that they impede the power of the most Blessed Eucharist, wherein Christ our Lord Himself is substantially present, and keep you from receiving the whole of its effects and fruits. See what a great evil this is, and how often you are careless about it. Disentangle yourself speedily from these chains, and pray the Blessed Virgin to deliver you from them.

3. Consider that these same venial sins are as chains with respect to Heaven, because none, even the most holy, can enter there, if his soul be stained with even one venial sin, even though he had all other gifts of all the Saints put together, because, as the Holy Scripture says, "There shall not enter into the new Jerusalem anything defiled."[9] Consider how great an evil this is, at least in yourself; for if one dear to the King were shut out for some reason from His sight, and forbidden to come to Him, all would suppose the cause to be some very grievous fault and offence. Think of this as regards your own case, and in future vehemently detest and avoid all venial sins.

4. Consider by what means we may be freed from our sins through the aid of the Blessed Virgin.

[9] St. Luke. xviii. 9.

First, when she obtains the remission of past sins, by the graces which, through her prayers, God gives to us for this end. Secondly, when in a similar manner she delivers us from the penalties which we deserve for sins remitted. Thirdly, when she keeps us from relapsing into them voluntarily and deliberately. Consider how great is this benefit; dispose yourself for obtaining it, and ardently beg it from the Blessed Virgin.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider who are those against whom Christ directs the parable—"Who trusted in themselves as just."[1] This you will see by the behaviour in the presence of the Judge of those who are not conscious of any crime worthy of punishment. On the contrary, those who fear, who have recourse to the Judge, and who strive to please Him in all ways, as though knowing themselves certainly to deserve the sentence of death, do not trust in themselves as just. See of which number you are, and determine what you have to do.

2. Consider how wrong it is to despise others, for such despisers Christ reproves. Think over the different ways in which persons despise others; and having reflected upon yourself, put away what needs putting away.

3. Consider the good penitent publican, who, conscious of his sins, with a contrite heart, and standing afar off, not so much as lifting his eyes towards Heaven, but striking his breast, said—"O God, be

[1] Apoc. xxi. 27.

merciful to me a sinner!" Reflect upon this, apply it to yourself, and imitate it.

4. Consider the fruit of an humble and truly penitent heart—"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." See which of these sayings applies to you, and conform yourself to Christ, the Master of humility, especially in His presence in the Eucharist, wherein He so exists as though, humanly speaking, He existed not, showing forth nothing exterior.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the first condition or circumstance of prayer as prescribed by our Lord to him who prays—"When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber."[2] Wherein He speaks of private prayer, which He will have in your chamber, that it may be more recollected and attentive than if it were performed in the street; that it may be freer, unfettered by respect of persons who are looking on, more fervent, with tears of devotion, and with all those exterior acts whereby the ardour of the soul influences the body. You, when you pray in your chamber, see if you have this condition of prayer, and having deplored your defects, if there be any, strive to avoid them

2. Consider the second condition of prayer. It is not sufficient to pray in the chamber, it must be in your own, and not in that of another, for he who is in the chamber of another is fearful lest he be found therein by him to whom it belongs. Thus our Lord would have all solicitude regarding external

[2] St. Matt. vi. 6.

things, even such as are good, put far away from the soul of him who prays, so that with all liberty he may openly pour forth to his Creator and Redeemer the ardent affections of a pure mind, seeking nothing in this life but the glory of God. See if you be like this in your progress, and strive to be such.

3. Consider the third condition of prayer demanded by Christ—"Having shut the door," lest he who prays be seen by others; so that every occasion of even remote distractions may be cut off. How much therefore, does our Lord demand that all present interior and exterior causes of distractions should be put far from us, since He will have even those which are past put away. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and determine what you have to do.

4. Consider the fourth condition of prayer—"Pray to the Father." That is, with such affection as sons would feel towards their Father. See whether you have this; if not—why not? and use all your efforts to obtain it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the fifth condition of prayer, which our Lord commanded to be "in secret," like a precious treasure, worthy of being hidden from the d l, lest it be snatched away by men, and its virtue taken away by vain applause; and hidden from yourself, lest it be wasted by distractions; that so our Lord God may be its sole secure possessor. See whether your prayer be such as to deserve the name of a "hidden treasure," and endeavour always to offer such to God.

2. Consider the sixth condition of prayer, produced by sure confidence in the presence of our Lord God, seeing him who prays—"Thy Father, Who seeth in secret will repay thee." This look of God demands exterior reverence; for even the look of a grave man will do this. See therefore, with what reverence you pray, in the posture of your body, in the acts of your senses and members; bewail and cut off your defects, if there be any.

3. Consider the seventh condition of prayer, to which this same presence of our Lord God urges us —namely, attention of mind. For if when you speak to your brother you are not distracted from your conversation, how much more should you attend when speaking to God, Who sees you, and Whom you should love and fear more than you love and fear your brethren. Examine into your behaviour herein, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider the eighth condition of prayer—the importance and gravity of the matter—"When you are praying, speak not much." There is no harm in long prayer, but in precipitate and inconsiderate words, such as are found in much speaking. Examine how it is with you, and accustom yourself to a well-ordered and unaffected prayer, and with careful words when your speech is with the Divine Persons; and endeavour this very day to fulfil these conditions of prayer.

WEDNESDAY.

Our Father.

1. Consider for what reason Christ would not have the Lord God called in prayer by any other name, amongst many, than the Name of Father, and try to profit by this consideration.

2. Consider that sons owe obedience to their father by the law of nature more than to any other man. See how you have paid this obedience, both in the world and in Religion; bewail the defects you may discover, and purpose amendment.

3. Consider that sons owe love to their father, if the father be benevolent, rich; if there be no cause in him to repel perfect love. See how you have hitherto loved Him. This you will recognize through those signs by which love towards men is displayed; and if there be anything amiss, mourn, and amend.

4. Consider that sons owe their father zeal in promoting his honour, his glory, and his interest. See how you do this by your words and your example; beg pardon for your negligence, and adopt all the sentiments of a good son. That you may do it, call to memory the example of those who have shone in this respect, and beg from Christ our Lord, the Eternal Son of the Father, all needful grace.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which the Lord God is truly our Father. He produced us more perfectly than did our father according to the flesh, who produced not our soul nor even the primary matter of our corporal substance. Whence it follows that you should at least entertain such an affection towards the Divine Majesty as sons entertain towards the parents who have engendered them. See whether you have this affection; be ashamed if you have it not, and endeavour to obtain it.

2. Consider what joy you should feel that you are the work of God's hands; more His work than any handiwork is the work of him who made it. Think how excellent this is, and see how perfectly you should live—you who have come forth from a hand of infinite wisdom and power, lest, humanly speaking, you do all in your power by your acts to bring shame to your Author.

3. Consider each and every one of your actions, which, considered materially, are produced in you by your Father, although He is not the cause of any sinfulness therein: and see whether they are worthy of being produced by God. Detest the stains by which on your own part they are defiled; cleanse them, and strive to make them clean for the future.

4. Consider with what respect and love you should treat your neighbour, knowing him to be the son of your Heavenly Father. How much would you honour and love the King's son, if present? How would you take heed not to offend or grieve him in

the slightest thing? See if you behave thus in regard to the sons of our Lord God; bewail your defects, and amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider that you should entertain greater affection, love, reverence, gratitude, &c., towards your Heavenly Father, than you would entertain for any Saint who raised you from death to life, since God has conferred on you a greater benefit by producing your soul out of nothing at your conception, than the Saint would have conferred in raising you from the dead, for he would not have produced the substance of your soul, but would only have caused its union with the body. See therefore what affection you would feel towards that Saint by whom you believed yourself raised from the dead; see whether you feel the same towards your Lord, and determine what you should do, and wherein you should show this affection towards your Lord and Creator.

2. Consider what affection you should feel towards your Heavenly Father for having created you without natural defects, neither blind, nor deaf, nor lame, &c. Whence it follows that you should employ the power and acts, both interior and exterior, of these senses for the greater glory of God. See whether you do this; if not, mourn, be ashamed, and amend.

3. Consider what affection you should feel towards your Heavenly Father, Who suffered you not to perish in your mother's womb, but would have you live and see the light, and be cleansed in the most holy

fountain of regeneration. See what you owe to your Lord God for this benefit, and show yourself grateful.

4. Consider the outward form wherein our affection towards our parents and benefactors is displayed; our great love and reverence for them, our joy at their prosperity and renown; our sadness at their adversity; our pleasure in their memory, or any other interior sentiments; and having reflected on yourself, try to advance in the like sentiments towards God and Divine things.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Mites fac et Castos.

1. Consider how necessary to all of us is meekness of soul on many occasions at home and abroad, and the constant necessity of meekness of soul in our intercourse with so many characters and dispositions. On the other hand, consider whether you are meek in words, gestures, and deeds; and having recognized the necessity of meekness of soul, and bewailed your defects, beg the Blessed Virgin to make you meek.

2. Consider how the Blessed Virgin makes men meek—(1) By her example; (2) by the many examples and doctrines of Christ her Son; (3) by her prayers offered up for you; (4) by the inspirations she obtains for you; (5) by the examples of so many of her sons and servants. See how you use these means; blame yourself, beg pardon, purpose amendment, and beg her to make you meek.

3. Consider the necessity of an angelic chastity in all labours and duties of the Society, especially taking

into account your past sins, or your temptations, or at least the propensities of nature, or exterior occasions and dangers. Examine then how you have armed yourself with this virtue, how you are using the means to obtain it, how you are putting away all obstacles thereto; and endeavour to profit.

4. Consider that the Blessed Virgin makes us chaste by the same means whereby she makes us meek. See therefore how you use these means; and because "no one can be continent except God give it," [8] seek the most chaste Virgin as your mediator, that by her prayers to God she may make us all meek and chaste.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the charity of those who took the deaf and dumb man to our Lord to be healed. In them we have the type of a good Christian, and far more of a good Religious, whose duty it is to bring to Christ all who need His medicinal hand. See whether you have done like this when in the world, and whether with an enkindled zeal you do it at least now. Consider for what reasons you should burn with this zeal, and strive to acquire it.

2. Consider the faith of those who brought the deaf and dumb man; for trusting that he would be healed by the mere touch of Christ, they are not said to have petitioned for his cure, but only to have begged Christ to lay His hands upon him. See whether you have such faith in the presence of the Blessed Eucharist, which not only brings to you the

[8] Wisdom viii. 21.

touch of Christ's hands, but Christ Himself as your food. Having pondered on the value thereof, burn with an ardent desire to receive Him worthily.

3. Consider the manner in which Christ healed this deaf and dumb man. Taking him from the multitude apart, "He put His finger into his ears, and spitting He touched his tongue; and looking up to Heaven, He groaned, and said to him, Ephtheta, which is, be thou opened." Spiritually explaining and applying this to yourself, strive to profit by it.

4. Consider for what reason our Lord, when He could have healed the man with one word, chose nevertheless to employ so many means, perhaps, that the man might make more account of the benefit of his cure. See therefore how you should repay your Lord, Who has suffered so many and such great things for the cure of your soul, Who also gives Himself to you as your food in the most Holy Eucharist. Reproach yourself for your ingratitude, and make a worthy use of this great remedy.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the second reason for which God Almighty is justly called in prayer "Our Father," for He has brought us up, and still brings us up. Bringing up comprises two things—(1) the feeding of the body; (2) the training of our actions. This bodily food He bestows more perfectly than an earthly father on his sons, for He creates or produces all your food, and everything which belongs either remotely or proximately to its production; He preserves all those sources from whence your food

proceeds, whereas the earthly father only buys food, or brings it from one place to another, but produces not its substance. Thus continually bringing you up, God keeps hunger away from you, in a manner far more excellent than if one who saw a poor man dying of hunger, by once feeding him delivered him from death. Whence it follows that you should love and reverence your Heavenly Father more than sons their fathers, or any one delivered from danger or death his benefactor. See whether you do this, and if not, be ashamed, and amend.

2. Consider that your Heavenly Father prepares for you more immediately and more perfectly the food which He has created, than the cook, or the fire, or even the earth, for He concurs more to its preparation than they do. Admire this condescension of His Supreme Majesty; burn with love for Him Who thus provides for you; and see how you should serve Him Who serves you better than any creature in those things which are useful for you.

3. Consider that your Heavenly Father nourishes you more thoroughly by the food which He hath prepared for you than parents nourish their children, for they only give the food exteriorly and nourish not interiorly, leaving that office to the natural heat, with which God Himself on His side most perfectly concurs in your nourishment. Whence it follows that you should be very grateful to your Lord for this cause also, and very temperate lest you should offend His eyes by taking into you unsuitable food, whether as to its substance, its quality, your greediness in taking it, &c., for He ought to concur more with the food, for the nourishment of your body, than the natural heat. Examine therefore what is your

behaviour in this respect, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider that your Heavenly Father nourishes you, not at certain times only, as earthly fathers do, but during your whole life, and also sustains that life by other means beside food. And as He does this for His glory, it follows that you should live so perfectly as in some manner to work meritoriously at every moment by glorifying Him. See if you do this, and endeavour to profit.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the other part of paternal education, which consists in the training of your actions, which your Heavenly Father does first, by good examples given for your imitation. Therefore has He given you so many Saints to imitate, and lastly His own in the flesh. Look at these examples; see how you are showing them forth in your actions; blush that you are so far removed from them; observe your principal defects, and avoid those that bring about this dissimilarity.

2. Consider the second means whereby God our Lord first trains you, namely, by good admonitions, both interior and exterior, by the Scriptures, by your rules, by your Superiors, by your equals, &c. Having reflected on all these things, see how little you profit; beg pardon; and promise amendment in certain of your principal defects.

3. Consider the third means whereby your Heavenly Father trains you to a good life, namely, by bestowing on you so many immense benefits both

natural and supernatural, and giving you with them so many helps. See how you employ these, blame yourself for your hardness of heart, and offer a docile heart to your Father.

4. Consider the fourth means whereby you are educated in a good life by your Father, namely, by punishments, and the fear thereof which He gives you, together with the hope of eternal rewards. Consider what power these have to imbue you with goodness and to make you holy, and at the same time how little progress you make. Mourn therefore; be ashamed; and rouse yourself to a serious amendment, so that having improved in good works, you may gladden the most merciful Heart of your Heavenly Father.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the third reason for which your Lord God is truly your Father. For according to the custom of earthly fathers, He has placed you in a certain state of life, and first of all in a state of faith; for He has made you a Christian and a Catholic, and has not left you among infidels or heretics. Oh, how great is this blessing. Thank then your Father, pray Him to bestow the same blessing on many who are in error: and because in this state you should live more perfectly than do the heretics or the heathens, see whether you do it. Therefore call to mind the heroic example of many heathens in every kind of moral virtue, for you will find abundant matter for shame, and for rousing yourself to a life worthy of the name of Christian.

2. Consider the second state wherein your Heavenly Father has placed you, the state of grace; for He would not suffer you to be of the number of those Catholics who believe well and live wickedly. Reflect upon the greatness of this blessing, give thanks, and so live as not to fall away from this state; which generally happens by a negligent guard of the eyes and tongue. See what is your behaviour, and take heed to the state of your soul.

3. Consider the third state in which your Father has placed you, the state of perfection; and, indeed, not a common, but an Apostolic perfection, yea, the state of the Lord Jesus Himself when living in the flesh. For the rule of life of your Order represents the state of Christ. Give thanks; see how you are corresponding to it; if you live as the perfection of your state demands; and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider the reasons for which, in this last stage of perfection to which you are called, you are not living so perfectly now as you lived before, when in your first fervour; or if you so live, at least you are not so perfect as you might be, after so many years of Religion, and so many helps received.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the fourth reason for which our Lord is justly called "Our Father;" for after the manner of earthly fathers He has left you an ample inheritance. First of all, He has left to you creatures, in endless variety, in great numbers; yea, created for your own good use, not only for necessity, but also

for your legitimate pleasure and recreation. Be amazed at the goodness of this paternal tenderness; and see how you should make use of these creatures, lest you grieve your Father. If you have made, or are making, a bad use of them, mourn, beg pardon, and begin henceforth to make a good use thereof.

2. Consider the second inheritance which your Father has left you; the gifts and virtues of the Holy Spirit, wherewith, if you will, you may be replenished, and be very rich. See how you are using these gifts, infused by the Sacraments, or how you are striving to increase them, and seek with a holy avarice to collect them in great abundance.

3. Consider your third inheritance—the Sacraments, especially the two ordinary ones of Penance and the Eucharist; reflecting upon their efficacy, excellence, and utility. See how you are using them, and try to make progress.

4. Consider the fourth inheritance prepared in Heaven—eternal glory. Think of its magnitude, and how much it behoves you to avoid all evil, to endure and to desire all trials, to follow all good, in the hope of this glory, considering that with the hope of a smaller reward the lovers of this world do and suffer more than you. Be ashamed, and amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the first quality of a son; he derives his being from his father, and he bears his likeness; so that according to your natural being, your soul and your body, you are truly the son of God, for you are produced by Him; on which account the Scripture

calls God "the Father of rain."[1] Again, on account of your free will and the use of your reason, you are truly the image and similitude of God. Thence it follows that you should so treat your soul and body in all your actions that they may deserve to be called actions of a son of God, worthy of that natural filiation, suffering nothing unbecoming thereto. Examine whether you do this, and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider that the second quality of the sons of God consists in their supernatural filiation—that is, their participation in sanctifying grace, on which account we are called by St. Peter, "Partakers of the Divine Nature."[2] See whether this grace display itself in you by such proofs as may render it worthy of belief; and again, how you are striving to increase this grace by meritorious works; and having bewailed your defects, try to amend them.

3. Consider the third quality of the sons of God, which consists in the love of enemies—"Love your enemies . . . that you may be the children of your Father,"[3] &c. Examine whether this love be active in you, and imitate God your Father in this respect.

4. Consider the fourth quality of the sons of God, which shines forth principally at the time when a man is first spiritually born by baptism, which cleanses him from all guilt, and frees him from the debt of punishment. Consider how excellent this is, how agreeable to God, how necessary for yourself; and aspire to such purity, that as far as in you lies you may be always free from the stain of any unre-

[1] Job xxxviii. 28.

[2] 2 St. Peter i. 4. [3] St. Matt. v. 44.

mitted sin, and from all liability to punishment that is not atoned for by satisfactory works. See whether you are attaining this, and strive to attain it.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Vitam Præsta Puram.

1. Consider that the first purity which is necessary to you is essential purity, consisting in freedom from all mortal sin. Having considered the manifold necessity of this purity, excite yourself to a most ardent desire of it; mourn if there has been anything contrary to it in your soul; and practically consider how you may always avoid mortal sin. To obtain this, beg ardently from the most pure Virgin that she may bestow a pure life on you and others.

2. Consider the manifold necessity of another purity, which consists in cleanness of the soul from venial sins committed with full deliberation, and from others, as far as is possible by the grace of God. At the same time consider how beautiful, and how dear to God and to the holy Angels, is a soul thus pure. Hence conceive an ardent desire of this purity. Study and employ every means for obtaining it; beg then earnestly from the most pure Mother of God, that she may obtain for you a life resplendent with such purity.

3. Consider the third kind of purity, so entirely necessary to the perfection of the Apostolic life to which we aspire; namely, freedom from serious agitation and perturbation, even involuntary, caused by vehemently inordinate motions. See how unbecoming

these are in a man who seeks mortification ; examine by what means you may acquire the purity opposed thereto, and strive to advance.

4. Consider the fourth purity, so familiar to the great servants of God; which, as St. Thomas Aquinas remarks, consists in this, that a man should bear no excessive affection even to things not wrong in themselves, but that as far as possible he should deprive himself of their use for God's sake. Such is the mortification of putting away even the lawful pleasures of the senses and of the mind itself. Think how noble a sacrifice of self this is, and how dear to God; rouse yourself to a desire thereof, and beg fervently of the most Blessed Mother to obtain for you this purity.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the first blessedness of our eyes, according to those words of our Lord—"Blessed are the eyes which see what you see."[1] They see in this kingdom the splendour of the Catholic Church, with the glorious worship of God, so widely spread by this your Order. Exult with joy; congratulate the Divine Majesty, attribute this to His grace in the name of your Order; humble yourself, referring this success to God, and see how it becomes you, both now and for the future, according to your power, to propagate this worship of God.

2. Consider the second blessedness of our eyes, which see so many creatures created by the love of God towards us, to the end that, serving us and giving

[1] St. Luke x. 22.

us lawful pleasure, they may excite us to the perpetual love and worship of God. See whether creatures produce this effect in you, and deplore and amend your faults in this respect.

3. Consider the third blessedness of our eyes, which see so many examples of manifold virtues both amongst good persons in the world and in those with whom we live, that thereby we may be roused to increase in Divine grace, and to accumulate great treasures of future glory. See whether you attain to this by such examples, and try to make progress.

4. Consider the fourth blessedness of our eyes, which see Christ our Lord veiled under the species of the most Holy Eucharist, and truly present therein. Think what a great blessing and solace this is to a soul that loves our Lord God. Thank our Lord, and determine how you shall show your gratitude by your deeds for so excellent a benefit and as it were beatitude in this life.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which the Heavenly Father is justly called in prayer "Our Father"—He is our Lord, namely, and we all are His servants, by right of creation and redemption; for those rights of His are indeed much greater than the rights of any lord over his servant, even over his meanest slave; and therefore we are strictly bound to serve God, and to be more perfectly subject to Him than slaves are to their lords. Examine therefore whether you show this by your acts towards your Lord God.

2. Consider the second reason for which God is *ours*—namely, by right of His friendship towards us; in which sense Josue asked the Angel, "Art thou one of ours or of our adversaries?" [2] Reflect on the many ways whereby our Lord God satisfies true friendship more than does any friend of yours. Thank Him that so great a Majesty deigns to cultivate friendship with you, a thing which Aristotle of old declared was not possible with God. Why therefore do you not converse with such a friend as freely, as long, or with as much pleasure as you converse with some miserable creature, with whom a conversation of an hour, or even many hours, appears like a quarter of an hour? Why do you so often prefer rather to offend this Heavenly Friend than to offend a companion by whom you are drawn away to break some rule? Blush, beg pardon, and amend in earnest.

3. Consider the third reason for which the Lord God is *ours*—namely, by right of the affinity which He contracted by espousing hypostatically our nature to the Person of the Word. What will you repay your Lord for so great an honour? Exalt His great mercy, and see how becomingly, how holily you should live in your human nature, lest by your discourteous actions you dishonour this your Relation. Put away all such actions and reform.

4. Consider the fourth reason for which the Lord God is *ours*—namely, by right of donation, for He gave us Christ, "and with Him has given us all things." [3] He has created all things for us; He performed the works of redemption for us; He reigns glorious in Heaven for us, that He may eter-

[2] Josue v. 13. [3] Rom. viii. 32.

nally rejoice us with His vision and countenance; He is made all things for us. Why therefore do you not make yourself all things to your Lord God through gratitude? Why do you give the greater part of your time, of your thoughts, of your desires, and of your words, to others, and not to God, as though you did not belong to God? Blush, and change yourself in good earnest into another man.

TUESDAY.

Who art in Heaven.

1. Consider that our Lord God is in Heaven as in our home towards which we are journeying, away from which home, as is usual on a journey, we have much to suffer, as to our food and habitation, and many troubles and labours. See therefore whether you are hastening to this home in such a way and with such a desire as exiles and pilgrims do to their country; and determine what you have to do in order to show by your works that Heaven is your country and this world truly a place of pilgrimage.

2. Consider that our Lord God is in Heaven as in the place where He has His treasures. For there He has and shows His riches which are now hidden from our eyes, more useful and more excellent by far than all earthly wealth. See therefore whether you are seeking these incorruptible riches, with at least as much effort, labour, and indefatigable diligence, as the followers of this world seek vile riches. Blush, reproach yourself for your blindness, and kindle within you a holy avarice for the glory of your Lord.

3. Consider that your God is in Heaven as the spectator of your warfare with your interior and your exterior enemies, holding and preparing a crown for you if you fight hard. See how you are fighting, and be thoroughly ashamed, because often by the slightest word of another person, at a mere sign of an evil companion, the devil can conquer you as it were with a sword of straw, carrying you away into many faults. What would he do if he used stronger weapons? Hence you will perceive what you have to do.

4. Consider that your God is in Heaven as the object or end to which all your interior and exterior actions ought to tend, for He created you for Himself. Look through each of your actions so as to recognize which of them God may claim for Himself, which of them are worthy of God; and then you will perceive perhaps that God may say of you what formerly He said by the prophet—"There is no cluster to eat."[4] Take heed that He say not this of you.

WEDNESDAY.

Hallowed be Thy Name.

1. Consider that the first means of hallowing the Name of God is by a holy manner of life, such as we read of in the Saints. See whether your life be such, and why not, when you have so many helps; and burn with an efficacious desire of holiness, without which desire you cannot be holy.

2. Consider the motives which you have to live holily, and to act differently from so many who are

[4] Micheas vii. 1.

living badly and imperfectly, For how is it possible that one who knows God should bear with a tranquil mind to see more persons living as the devil wishes them, than living holily as God wishes them to do?

3. Consider that the second means of hallowing the Name of God is fervently to stir up others to glorify God for our own holy lives. This means of hallowing the Name of God depends on the first, and supposes it to exist in an excellent degree, so that it cannot help displaying itself even to the unwilling and reluctant. See whether your actions be such, or rather the contrary, and put away such things as give offence to those who are without, as well as to those who live with you.

4. Consider that the third means of hallowing the Name of God consists in care for the sanctification of others, that is, in helping others by earnest effort and labour to become Saints. To this you are called, for the end of your Order is not your own perfection alone, but also that of others, in a manner suited to the state of life of each one. Consider how you are labouring for this, and, inflamed with a great desire of God's honour, strive with all your might to hallow the Name of our Lord yourself, and through as many others as possible, considering that He is so greatly dishonoured by so many unworthy seculars and Religious.

THURSDAY.

Thy Kingdom Come.

1. Consider the eternal duration of the Kingdom of Heaven, and with it all those blessings, so far

greater and better than all earthly goods, without any mixture or danger of evil, and so intense and perfect, that the human heart cannot in this life comprehend them. Why therefore do you not as carefully perform those works which you know to be a direct help towards obtaining this Kingdom, as you perform other works, which either do not deserve it, or at least are not a direct means towards it. Blush, and look well to your affairs.

2. Consider that no earthly King gives to his courtiers a portion of his kingdom, with so much desire and so great a liberality as God does, Who indeed in a manner forces His Kingdom upon us, by blessings, punishments, and threats, so that by every means He may raise us thereto. Acknowledge your happiness, and resist God no longer. Follow Him Who draws you, and consider these words as said to yourself—"Friend, go up higher."[5] Be not content with a low place, but give more pleasure to your God, Who will rejoice all the more at your greater good.

3. Consider the means by which, through the help of God, we may obtain a very high place in this Kingdom of God. These are, namely, to keep our consciences pure from every mortal sin, to do all our ordinary works for a supernatural end, to destroy their good by no venial sin, and to perform them with an ardent and intense affection, either with respect to God, or to some virtue, or to something loved legitimately for God's sake. To which, if you add other works of supererogation, to which you are not bound either by the laws of God and the Church, or by your rules, so much the better. Examine what is

[5] St. Luke xiv. 10.

your conduct in this respect, and see what is wanting to you.

4. Consider the other Kingdom which God possesses in this life, when He reigns in our souls by His grace and justice. Because He is deprived of this Kingdom in so many of the wicked, desire that it may be increased, and on your part help according to your condition, by prayers, examples, and admonitions. If this Kingdom be in you, give thanks, and take pains that it may always be in you.

FRIDAY.

Thy Will be done on Earth as It is in Heaven.

1. Consider the first means whereby God's will is done in Heaven; no sin contrary thereto is admitted. See what is your own conduct in this respect; humble yourself; beg pardon; and resolve to live so carefully, that you may sin as seldom and as little as possible.

2. Consider the second means whereby God's will is done in Heaven; nothing is left undone by the heavenly spirits which they know God desires from them. Here reflect as in the first point, and purpose amendment, preparing yourself to accomplish those things which you know that God most frequently demands of you by interior inspirations.

2. Consider the third means whereby God's will is done in Heaven; the heavenly spirits are occupied without interruption in things agreeable to God, and immediately relating to His glory and pleasure. See how you perform such actions, and what you have to do in your state of life.

4. Consider the fourth means, whereby the heavenly spirits do the will of our Lord God in Heaven; they desire nothing for themselves or for others except what God wills; they refuse nothing either for themselves or for others which they know that God wills; and they are content even if they see their friends suffer, or undergo punishment, &c. Imitate this practically: so you shall escape many sins which you commit by not conforming yourself in all things to the will and actions of your Superiors, through whom both to you and to your friends the will of God is declared.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Iter Para Tutum.

1. Consider the first enemies which prevent the security of our journey to Heaven—namely, invisible enemies, or the devils, impeding our progress by various modes of temptation. See by what means they hinder you, be cautious therein; and because their power is great, invoke the Queen of the Angels to make your journey safe. It will be safe, if you first of all exclude, by guarding your senses, and the rejection of bad thoughts, the entrance and attacks of these enemies. See what is your behaviour in this respect.

2. Consider the second enemies which hinder our journey—namely, persons in the world, who by their offences or wiles, occasion us many defects. Invoke our Lady against these, and see how cautious you should be in conversation with externs, lest they injure you.

3. Consider the third enemies who molest our journey to Heaven—namely, those friends who by their examples or words are occasions to you of various imperfections, on account of human respect and other reasons. Implore particularly the aid of the Blessed Virgin against these weapons, concealed under the form of friendship; which help will not be wanting to you if on your part you make more account of consoling the Mother of God by your good life, than of pleasing your companions for whose sake you offend God. See if you do this; and acknowledge how foolish you are to offend the greater friends for the sake of the less.

4. Consider the fourth enemy who molests your journey to Heaven—yourself, namely, whose "flesh lusteth against the Spirit."[6] For your spirit indeed rebels against God; uses natural affections to your destruction; abuses creatures to your detriment, and neglects to employ many means for performing this journey more perfectly. Invoke your Mother, therefore, against this enemy, from whom, if you will be firm, and God's aid be with you, you need suffer no injury, but will find with the temptation a way of escape.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the humility of the ten lepers, who, knowing the uncleanness of their limbs infected with leprosy, meeting our Lord Jesus, "stood afar off."[1] Thank them in spirit for this reverence displayed towards your Lord; love this humble discretion in

[6] Gal. v. 17. [1] St. Luke xviii. 13.

them; and having reflected upon your sins, even such as are venial, see how unclean you are, and how it becomes you to stand afar off from your Lord, especially if you have offended Him by any one mortal sin. Admire, therefore, the goodness of our Lord Jesus, Who gives Himself to you nevertheless so often as your food in the Blessed Eucharist.

2. Consider the sentiments with which they cried out, and their words—"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Consider why they call him Master, and not Lord, and try to profit.

3. Consider how profitable to them was the answer of Christ—"Go, show yourselves to the Priests. And as they went, they were made clean." In which acknowledge the humility of Christ, Who, although not bound by the law, referred them to the judgment of the Priests, whose office it was to judge of lepers; and again, the advantages of deferring to the judgment of superiors, by which they obtained their much desired cleansing. Think how the same thing happens by deferring to our Superiors, and see what is your own behaviour in this respect.

4. Consider the gratitude of the Samaritan leper, who alone when he found himself clean, "went back with a loud voice glorifying God; and fell on his face before His Feet, giving thanks." Embrace in spirit this holy gratitude, which so pleased Christ, that He said—"Were not ten made clean? And where are the nine? There is none found to return and give glory to God save this stranger." See how our Lord thinks of everything done for His sake, and burn with a desire of serving Him generously.

MONDAY.

Give us this Day our Daily Bread.

1. Consider the reasons for which Christ gives the name of bread to all those things which we require, whether as food or for the supply of our other wants. This may be, because we are not to use them more than is necessary, as we should not needlessly use bread; or because we are to be content with what is common, as we are content with common bread; or because we are not to use even things that are moderate and easily prepared, with too great an affection, but only as we should use bread. Examine what is your behaviour in the use of such things, and live according to your state of poverty.

2. Consider the pronoun "our," which teaches us that we should be contented with what is given to us, not asking for what is due or suitable to others, much less usurping such things, especially in an unbecoming manner; and if you have failed in this respect, amend.

3. Consider why our Lord calls it our "daily" bread—namely, that He may put away from you all solicitude about to-morrow, and teach you in a salutary manner to live from day to day, not thinking about what is to happen to you, not desiring any grand offices, nor doing anything in order to obtain them. See if you do this, and try to proceed aright.

4. Consider why we are ordered to pray for "this day"—namely, because this cuts away the desire of a long life, and the evil security which springs from it, but warns us so to live and use the things of

this life, as though to-morrow we were to die. If this were to be, good God! from how many evil things we should abstain! To how many good works we should apply ourselves! Because, therefore, you are not certain of to-morrow, so live as if to-morrow you were to die; and this not from the fear of punishment, but from the love of God.

TUESDAY.

Forgive us our Trespasses.

1. Consider the debts which you have contracted in the world on account of your grievous sins, more numerous than the hairs of your head. Having thought over them, or at least considered their nature, bewail them, be ashamed, and often reviving your intense grief, deplore them, beg pardon, and see what you ought to do for your Lord, Who has now delivered you from them by a good confession.

2. Consider the fresh debts which you have contracted and do still contract in Religion, and this as even seculars would not do, unless under some grievous apprehension. But you have contracted them rashly and as it were by chance, only from your incautious mode of life.

3. Consider the evils both in this life and in the next which spring from these undischarged debts, that so you may take greater heed that they be not so great, nor so often contracted.

4. Consider the means whereby you may pay off these your daily debts, and which are presented and almost forced upon you both by the Church and by

Religion. See therefore how you are making use of them, and how much you ought to make use of them, lest with greater trouble and less gain you be compelled to make use of other means in the future life.

WEDNESDAY.

As We Forgive them that Trespass against Us.

1. Consider how unworthy they are who when God has forgiven them their trespasses, forgive not those of others; and how such persons draw on themselves the sentence of these words in the Lord's Prayer. Examine therefore whether you cherish in your soul an unforgiving spirit because of offences received from your neighbour, and put it away as quickly as possible.

2. Consider the first condition which ought to accompany forgiveness of the offences of your neighbour—namely, you must not seek revenge for them, since you would not God took vengeance after your serious sins. Consider how just this is, and how it is fulfilled by you, and try to fulfil it thoroughly.

3. Consider the second condition which ought to accompany forgiveness of the offences of your neighbour—there should not be in your mind the smallest sentiment of aversion towards him; this treatment you desire from God towards yourself. Here therefore examine every corner of your conscience with respect to all persons, and determine what you have to do.

4. Consider the third condition for forgiving the injuries of your neighbour—namely, that you should

do good to him who has given you occasions of merit and humiliation, and has taught you not to do or say to another that which would offend you if said or done to yourself. For so also do you expect and receive continual benefits from your Lord, Whom you have so many times offended. Imitate Him, pray for your persecutors, and do them good, "That you may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven, Who raineth upon the just and the unjust."[2]

THURSDAY.

And Lead us not into Temptation.

1. Consider how greatly you should fear all, even the smallest temptations, because you have so often experienced in yourself a progress from smaller to greater temptations, and a fall therein; also because you have heard and read of grievous falls, even among great Saints, which have happened from small and not obviously evil beginnings; and again, because you have in yourself the seed, the nourishment, and the growth of almost all temptations, your flesh with its propensity to evil, so many motions of inordinate affections, besides so many exterior occasions of evil. Therefore consider yourself as placed in the midst of enemies and snares. Walk cautiously, and think not lightly of things that appear light, lest you be conquered.

2. Consider that by your natural strength you cannot overcome vicious temptations, nay, not even slight ones, without a special gift of God, without

[2] St. Matt. v. 45.

which you cannot even think anything good. Fully recognizing this, humble yourself, be in fear of a fall, and make your Lord God propitious to you, lest He should ever cease to help and comfort you by His powerful aid.

3. Consider that those temptations are the most dangerous to which we ourselves give occasion, or which we allow to remain in us, whether by a negligent guard of the senses in looking, reading, hearing, speaking, touching things that are dangerous, though not evil in themselves, or by not repelling them directly they have entered. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and take all needful care.

4. Consider how men of the world prepare themselves when they know that some very powerful enemy is desirous of their ruin. As therefore the power of any evil spirit is greater than that of any human being, his experience in fighting the greatest, his victory frequent, the attack being often unperceived, and veiled under the form of virtue, see what you have to do, foolish and ignorant as you are, not to be drawn into this combat and be conquered thereto.

FRIDAY.

But Deliver us from Evil.

1. Consider the first evil from which we need to be delivered—namely, the evil of our multiplied offences. Think how grievous is this evil, comparing it with the principal evils of this life, so that recognizing its greater gravity you may fight against it

with the greater hatred, and fly from every kind of sin as you would fly from a serpent.

2. Consider the second evil from which we desire deliverance—namely, the pains of Purgatory, whereto by our daily sins we render ourselves liable. Compare the severity of this evil with all the diseases and torments of this life, whether of the Martyrs or of the wicked. For, as the Saints teach, it is greater than all of these. Resolve therefore to escape those evils, which you have already deserved, by a mortified mode of life and by good works, especially those of intense love of God and the deepest sorrow for sin.

3. Consider how in future you may avoid this twofold evil of sin and punishment; whether by shunning those occasions, persons, and actions whereby you may incur it; or by serious application of the mind to Divine things, and the perfect use thereof, which with God's help will bestow strength for escaping these evils.

4. Consider the means whereby our Lord God usually delivers us from evil, in the Church and in Religion; whether from Himself, or by your Superiors, or by the Sacraments, or by good examples, or by any other way. And therefore cooperate in earnest with God, considering the example of the sick, who take so much care, endure so many severe and bitter things, to get rid of their diseases and to be cured as quickly as possible; whereas spiritual evils are more grievous than any diseases.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Ut Videntes Jesum, semper Collætemur.

1. Consider that the end of all our works should be to see Jesus after death, both in His Divinity and His Humanity; for this it is necessary both that our works should be unstained by any sin, and that we should be acceptable to God—that is, in a state of grace. Reflect on these things, and learn what is necessary in order that you should see our Lord Jesus.

2. Consider whether you desire the sight of Jesus as you desire the sight of curious things; and if you do not so desire it, think how disgraceful and detestable this is in a Christian, and still more in a Religious, who knows by Divine faith, and by the light of God, how good is our Lord Jesus and the clear vision of His glory. Therefore, excite yourself to a most ardent desire of this clear vision of God.

3. Consider that the end which you seek in your works is short, transitory, and often even pernicious; and yet how much do you do and suffer to obtain it! And is not our Lord Jesus worthy that for His sake you should at least do and suffer as much as for other and most vile things! Think of this, and profit thereby.

4. Consider how much the Blessed Trinity, Christ our Lord, and all the Saints, desire that after death you should see our Lord Jesus, and be joined to their blessed society. For this has God given so many helps to salvation; for this He willed His Son to be

born and to die, and for this He left so many sources of His grace in the use of the Sacraments. It is just therefore that you should cooperate with so intense a desire of our Lord God, and should use these means of salvation. See if you do this, and amend what needs amendment.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the reason of Christ's words, that "No man can serve two masters;"[1] especially two masters opposed to each other, as Christ and the world are in their doctrines and in all their qualities; for, indeed, he who loves and embraces the world, its comforts, glory, and honour, has despised Christ. See to which of these masters you are attached; not to Christ, indeed, if you do not observe Christ's rule.

2. Consider the motives which you have for serving Christ rather than the world. For there are greater and nobler for Christ's service than for that of the world. Thinking on this, reproach yourself for your blindness, that, having left the world, you are seeking in Christ's house the world, rather than the imitation of Christ; and for the future, so live as to show by your deeds that you are the servant of Christ.

3. Consider the various degrees of the servants of Christ; some being holier than others; and by the example of seculars, who aspire with all possible zeal to high offices in the King's service, excite yourself to seek, as is your duty, greater perfection every day.

[1] St. Matt. vi. 24.

Why then are you content with the lowest place and degree? Why this want of eagerness? Examine and put away the cause thereof.

4. Consider the fewness of those who serve Christ as perfectly as many worldlings serve their masters for the hope of worldly gain. Therefore, moved by a holy compassion, try to compensate in some degree for this scarcity of perfect servants of God, by living perfectly yourself, and implore the necessary grace of God both for yourself and others to attain this end.

MONDAY.

1. Consider what provision our Lord makes of the necessities of His servants, whom He will not have solicitous about food or raiment, but takes on Himself the care thereof, as of the birds and lilies of the field. "Behold," He says, "the birds of the air; for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith?"[2] Considering these words with pious affection, burn with filial love towards the most Sacred Heart of your Heavenly Father, and strive all your life to retain and increase it.

[2] St. Matt. vi. 26, 28—30.

2. Consider another reason whereby Christ urges this confidence upon us—"For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things:" and piously examine how this abundance of our necessities moves our Heavenly Father to help us—namely, as servants, sons, clients, friends, spouses, members, brethren, &c. See at the same time whether you show yourself such a servant, client, son, &c., to your Lord, as you should do, and strive to supply what is wanting in you.

3. Consider what is the reason that your Heavenly Father, knowing as He does your spiritual wants—that is, how frequent are your faults, and how much is wanting to perfection, yet neither averts these faults, nor bestows what is wanting, as He does on others who are more perfect. And because the cause is to be found in yourself, and perhaps not one cause alone, bewail what you discover, and try to remove it as soon as possible.

4. Consider the right order which we should observe in our occupations; not only as to the time used, but as to the degree of diligence and serious application of the mind—"Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things"—namely, progress in learning, help in every need, as much as is sufficient and required for your good—"shall be added unto you." Strive to advance in the constant habit of attending more to spiritual things than to others, which, although good are not spiritual.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for not rashly judging or condemning your brother—he who does so incurs the judgment of God and men, and often condemnation, if not final, at least temporal. See how contrary it is to charity, and to the union of members of the same body; for when does one hand or foot ever condemn the other, or be angry with it, even if it should happen to meet with an unforeseen fall? Put away whatever you may find of rash judgment in yourself.

2. Consider that those whom you judge are dear to our Lord; His friends, sons, spouses, and perhaps more pleasing to Him than you. At any rate, you know not so much evil of them as you do of yourself. And yet do you assail by your judgment this Lord of theirs, Who said—"As long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me."[3] To these judgments belong detraction, blaming their actions, laughing at them, and indirectly criticising them. If you do this, mourn and amend.

3. Consider that to those who judge rashly the words are said—"Thou hypocrites, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[4] For, indeed, any one of us is bound to help himself before he helps others, not only by these means, but also by acknowledgment, reproof, censure, and amendment of faults. When, therefore, you have cast out all your own defects, then it will be lawful to turn to

[3] St. Matt. xxv. 40. [4] St. Matt. vii. 5.

your neighbour, and help him in things worthy of public censure.

4. Consider the reward gained in Heaven, whether by shunning for God's sake rash judgments and all things which displease Him, or by doing such things as please Him; this reward is expressed in these words—"Give" (that is, to God) "and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom."[5] Having considered this, resolve so to live that as much as possible, in every moment of time, by meritorious works, you may heap up this measure; see how you are striving after this, and grieve that you lose so many occasions of merit.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the blindness and folly of many even amongst Religious, who disregard this prohibition of Christ—"Give not that which is holy to dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine;"[6] who having so often consecrated to God their works, their members, their powers, and the acts thereof, yet employ them on frivolous things, and such as are agreeable to the devils themselves, the enemies of God. See if you are of this number, and determine what you have to do.

2. Consider the fruit of ardent and perfect prayer —"Every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."[7] You will perceive the perfection of

[5] St. Luke vi. 38.

[6] St. Matt. vii. 6. [7] St. Matt. vii. 8.

prayer by dwelling on the sense of these three words—"Ask, seek, knock," and, reflecting on yourself, see what your prayer is, and what it should be.

3. Consider the argument used by Christ to assure us of the answer which is to follow upon our worthy prayers—"What man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Meditating on all these words with pious and grateful affection, inflame your heart with a most ardent charity towards the merciful tenderness of Divine love, and if you shall offer what you are bound and able to do on your part, hope in Him, for He never forsakes those who seek Him.

4. Consider the causes which prevent us from being heard by God, though we have long asked Him for this or that thing; and because it is incumbent on you now to take care of yourself, remove these causes, that you may be filled with your Lord's gifts. For He desires as much, yea more, to fill you with His gifts, than parents desire to enrich their children with earthly goods.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider what abundant sentiments of love towards others are required from us by God—"All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them."[8] Think

[8] St. Matt. vii. 12.

now of all those things which you would have others do to you, and the omission whereof troubles you, and having reflected on your own way of acting with regard to others, see what is deficient in you.

2. Consider the sure means of reaching Heaven—"Enter ye in at the narrow gate. Narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it."[9] See what has to be put away and what to be acquired, that you may be one of the few who walk in the narrow way to Heaven.

3. Consider whether your life be the life of the few of whom our Lord says—"Few there are that find it." See whether your way of life with regard to food, drink, sleep, work, prayer, speech, desires, grief of mind, and all regular observance, shows forth the narrowness of this way, and take heed to yourself.

4. Consider the road that leads away from Heaven—"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat." Compassionate these unhappy souls, grieve over their sins, rouse yourself to zeal for withdrawing them from this road. Thank our Lord, Who has taken you out of this way, and take heed lest in Religion, by a lax life, you seek perdition.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider how constant you should be in the service of Christ and the observance of your rules, similar to those of whom the Lord says—"Every one therefore that heareth these My words, and doth

[9] St. Matt. vii. 14.

them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock."[10] Wherein reflect why the spiritual life is like a perfect house, and kindle within yourself an ardent love thereof.

2. Consider the three enemies of this spiritual house—"The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew." Think what these signify, that you may resist them effectually and give them no place.

3. Consider the cause of stability in this house. "They beat upon that house," namely, "the rain, the floods, and the winds; and it fell not; for it was founded on a rock." What means this rock unless Christ, Who is the Corner-stone? Among other meanings it may represent the determined will to die rather than offend God with full deliberation. Try to acquire this by the intimate knowledge and understanding of sin, for a want of this knowledge is the principal cause that even slight temptations are yielded to.

4. Consider these words of Christ our Lord—"Every one that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." And see whether these words may perhaps apply to you. Therefore see what you have to do, lest you build in vain.

[10] St. Matt. vii. 24.

SATURDAY.

Sit Laus Deo Patri.

1. Consider the motives which we all have in common, and you in particular, to praise God with heart, mouth, and works. Examine whether the praise of God, as proceeding from you in the actions specially instituted for His praise, be proportioned to these motives, and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

2. Consider the means whereby God is practically to be praised by you from these motives. You will learn them by the examples of the holy spirits in Heaven, who there so perfectly praise God, and by the lives of the Saints, and having reflected on yourself, see what you have to do to approach as near to these as possible.

3. Consider the praise and honour usually paid by men to benefactors, or persons otherwise entitled to respect, and this indeed from their very heart, with all exactness, and on every occasion, and see whether you offer at least such as these to your Lord. Be ashamed, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider the many ways wherein we are bound to praise God, namely, by the words of our lips and minds, and especially by our deeds. Think how this is practically to be done, taking counsel from the light of your own conscience, and the laws of spiritual life; and so perform your smallest actions, even such as are secret, and known only to

God and the Angels, that they may deserve to be acknowledged by God as praise. Let your whole interior and exterior life be *Laus Deo Patri*.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the grief of the widow on account of the death of her only son, "who was carried out dead,"[1] and the various causes of this grief. On the other hand, consider the grief of our Mother the Church, and Religious Orders, if it happened that one of their sons be spiritually sick, or, which God forbid, if he be dead from mortal sin. Compare the far greater motives for this grief with the motives for the widow's grief, and arm your heart with a very firm determination to fly from every dangerous spiritual sickness, and to secure yourself against dying spiritually to the grace of God. Nay, rather mourn bitterly for your past sickness and death.

2. Consider the kind sympathy of the numerous crowd who accompanied the widow as she took her son to the grave; welcome with deep affection the sympathy of the crowd; thank them in spirit, and rouse yourself to show a similar compassion for the afflictions of your neighbours, thinking over the reasons whereby you should be moved to show kindly sentiments. Show these sentiments on every occasion, for the honour and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the Head of us all.

3. Consider the most merciful Heart of our Lord Jesus, Who indeed without being asked, as He saw the corpse carried along, moved with compassion for

[1] St. Luke vii. 11.

the afflicted mother, said to her, "Weep not;" and raised up her son by His power, and "gave him to his mother." Thank your Lord for this compassion and favour; embrace this so tender Heart of your Lord, which is so quickly touched by the miseries of others; beg for a similar affection towards others, and conceive a great hope of your own salvation. For if unasked He so favoured the widow, how much more will He favour you, if you pray to Him without ceasing.

4. Consider the manner whereby He raised up the widow's son. "He came near and touched the bier and said, Young man, I say to thee arise." Compare this with the approach of our Lord Jesus to you in Communion, when He touches you more closely and speaks to you inwardly with yet more words. Examine therefore why it is that you do not rise from your spiritual diseases; and having deplored them, purpose amendment.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the motives of Christ our Lord in raising up the widow's son, and having thanked Him heartily for this benefit, try to gather fruit from each one of them by applying them to yourself and the state of your soul.

2. Consider the state of the dead son's soul after death, that is, the sentiments of his soul therein, especially these three—(1) What he then mourned for as done or omitted when he was in the body; (2) what he desired to do and not to omit if it were given to him to return to life; (3) what he feared,

knowing himself to be taken before a severe Judge. And having reflected on yourself in each of these points, correct what needs correction, and strive to acquire what needs to be acquired, lest your soul fall into the same state.

3. Consider the affection of the man raised to life towards Christ: what or how great it was and wherein it displayed itself thenceforward. On the other hand, consider that you have been treated with yet greater favour by the good Jesus, and not once alone, when you are freed from the death of the soul, by justification in the Sacraments, or when you are preserved from falling into this death. See then with what affection your heart should turn towards Jesus, and wherein it should display itself towards so great a Benefactor.

4. Consider the feeling which filled the minds of that crowd seeing this miracle of Christ. For as the Evangelist says—"There came a fear on them all, and they glorified God, saying, A great Prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people." And you, hearing this, excite in your heart a filial joy, because that multitude glorified your Lord for the favour He had bestowed. Thank the Guardian Angels who excited the multitude thereto, and as it were compassionate your Lord to Whom so many offer not due thanks for benefits received. Thank Him for them so as to make amends for their ingratitude, and take great pains not to show by your deeds that you are as thankless as they.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the fidelity of John's disciples, who having heard of the miracle of Christ in raising up the widow's son, and the words of the multitude praising it, immediately "told John all these things."[2] For this is the duty of a good subject and disciple to tell his superior and master of those things which may be useful to him. Having considered the multifold necessity of this, examine whether you be thus faithful to your Order and Superior in declaring such things as give either scandal or edification, or which concern any need of your brother or your neighbour; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

2. Consider the good spirit displayed toward Christ by John, who, making use of the opportunity, immediately sent two of his disciples to Christ, inquiring whether He were the promised Messiah, so that, as he foresaw would happen, they might at the sight of Christ's miracles, remain with Christ and forsake himself. Hence learn how far removed the servant of Christ should be from envy and love of his own convenience and esteem. Nor should you seek your own, but the comfort of others, even if that comfort must be procured at some cost of your own; and take heed in future that you seek not yourself in anything, whether in the choice of persons who have to do with you, or in any other matter. But rather resolve in all things to follow justice, and that which a right reason free from all private affection shall

[2] St. Luke vii. 18.

dictate. Examine yourself therefore in this matter, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider the humility of John, who, although as a Prophet he knew who Christ was, nevertheless sends to Him in order that it should be declared by Christ Himself. So you may learn not only not to attribute to yourself what you have not got, whether of natural or supernatural talents, but also to conceal those which you have with the desire of honouring Him Who is wont to reward that which He sees in secret, both here and in Heaven.

4. Consider the exact obedience of the disciples of John, who went immediately to Christ as they were commanded, and questioned Him on nothing else than that which John had desired, and indeed in the same order and with the same words as he had uttered them—"Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?" They added nothing in style or ceremony. Hence learn how exact you should be in simple and blind obedience, having considered the advantage and necessity thereof.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider how Christ answered the question of John the Baptist by His works, showing Himself to the disciple to be the promised Messiah. "In that same hour He cured many of their diseases and hurts and evil spirits, and to many that were blind He gave sight."[3] For deeds are the best of all testimony regarding the state and condition of any one whatsoever. Learn hence to show yourself by your

[3] St. Luke vii. 21.

deeds before God and men to be a Religious, striving to imitate Jesus Christ. Examine whether you show this in your speech, food, clothing, gestures, carriage, prayer, studies, and in the dispositions of your mind; and putting before you the example of Christ, correct what you shall find dissimilar to Him.

2. Consider in these miracles of Christ four spiritual evils which require cure from Christ our spiritual Physician. For some suffer from languor in the service of God, that is, from a certain tepidity and laxity of spirit in their works. Some have wounds, that is, faults known and offensive to others. Some are tormented by evil spirits, that is, by vices injurious to purity. And some are blind because they live as though they saw not with the eyes of faith, that heavenly gifts are more to be sought for than earthly gifts, that the favour of God is more to be esteemed than that of men, and that God is more to be feared than their neighbour. See whether you are subject to any of these diseases, and call upon Christ that He may heal you. But because you will not be healed unless your freewill cooperate with Divine grace, strive earnestly to amend.

3. Consider the words of Christ to the disciples of John, so free from pride, from exaggeration, and unnecessary matter—"Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are made clean, the deaf hear, the dead rise again."[4] See whether you abstain from pride and exaggeration of words, when you relate anything, or praise anything, or accuse, or excuse

[4] St. Luke vii. 22.

another, or when you are at confession; and try to put away all that is amiss in your words.

4. Consider the true signs of the Messiah's advent into the world, and into the soul of the just man, in the things before mentioned. Wherefrom gather this twofold fruit—(1) Affectionate thanks because Christ our Lord willed you to be born after His advent in the flesh, that your salvation and perfection might be easier; (2) examine what are the proofs of Christ's presence in your soul by grace. For these will be the proofs: if you find your blindness diminish with your increase in age, if you feel yourself to be walking more valiantly in His ways, if your soul be cleansed more and more, if you grow in obedience, &c.; and according to what you shall find draw forth proportionate affections towards our Lord God.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider these words of Christ—"To the poor the Gospel is preached;" which words Christ added as a sign of the excellence of His office, namely, the office of the Messiah sent by the Father. From whence learn two things—(1) How much is to be hoped for from the mercy of this Messiah, Who disdains not to communicate His gifts, even to the meanest persons, as the very poor, and therefore give thanks for such condescension on the part of your Lord; (2) and learn not to choose the highest employments, but mean ones, after the example of Christ, Who manifested Himself first of all to persons of such humble station. Therefore, in your conversation, in the schools, in discourses, and elsewhere,

spend yourselves more freely on such persons, helping their souls, and treating with them at home and abroad, so as to conform yourself to Christ your Head. See whether you do this, and control your pride, ever inclining towards great things, persons, and offices.

2. Consider these other words of Christ—"Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in Me."[5] Hence again learn two things—(1) Not to believe the evil judgments and scandal of others, for foolish and thoughtless men are often scandalized at the good; (2) take heed that you are not easily scandalized at others, but rather put a favourable construction upon everything. Examine into the reasons why you should do this, and if you have been rash in this matter, control yourself, and do not to others what you would not have done to you.

3. Consider two things which Christ praised in the actions of John the Baptist—"That he was not inconstant, or easily moved by impulse, like a reed shaken with the wind; (2) that he was not clothed in soft garments or costly apparel, like those who live delicately in the palaces of Kings. Reflect on your own life; see whether these praises of John can apply to you, and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider the praise bestowed on John's office as the precursor of Christ. For He called him "more than a Prophet." He said that it was written of him —"Behold I send My Angel before Thy face, who shall prepare Thy way before Thee." From which words take occasion for the glory of Christ your Lord, to desire that in this Apostolic state to which you are called, you may always and everywhere so live, by

[5] St. Luke vii. 23.

God's grace, that in His judgment you may live as an Angel, preparing the way in your own soul, and in that of others for the entrance of God, the Spouse of your soul. Wherefore consider what things are necessary thereto; beg them from God; and try to acquire them.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the fruits of the praises of John coming from the mouth of Christ, for immediately when the people heard them, the publicans justified God and received the baptism of John. It is a good sign when a soul makes progress as soon as it has heard the words of Christ, especially when it does good works, not expressly but only indirectly recommended by the words of Christ, as it happened here, where Christ mentioned nothing about receiving Baptism from John. Examine how often you read, hear, and speak the words of Christ, and profit not thereby, although they are words which directly and clearly require something of you, and often threaten you. Therefore inquire into the causes of your hardness, and amend.

2. Consider the hardness of the Pharisees and lawyers, who despised the counsel of God against themselves, and would not be baptized by John. It is a marvel how ready were these rough people, and even the publicans themselves, to receive John's baptism, while the lawyers declined it. Examine the reasons why these wise men acted thus foolishly, and see whether worldly wisdom does not make you

seek high things, careless of those works of piety which the rough and simple people of Christ perform.

3. Consider the modesty of Christ, Who, wishing to reprove this hardness of the Pharisees and lawyers, would not, although He might have done so, use bitter words, nor any harshness, but only said of them—"They are like to children sitting in the market place and speaking one to another, &c."[6] If therefore their Lord so gently described their faults, how much more does it become you to leave untouched the more trifling defects of your equals, and not to bitterly reprove or bring them to remembrance. Examine whether you do this, and temper the sharpness of your speech with religious moderation.

4. Consider the malignity of judgment corrupted by malevolence in the Pharisees, who, as Christ bears witness, said of John, who "came neither eating bread nor drinking wine," that "he had a devil," and of "the Son of Man, Who came eating and drinking," that He was "a glutton, and a drinker of wine, a friend of publicans and sinners." On the other hand, examine whether you are perhaps ready to judge the actions of others. Consider the reasons why you should not do this; if you have formerly been rash, control for the future both your judgment and the boldness of your tongue, and beg of God the pardon of your faults.

[6] St. Luke vii. 32.

SATURDAY.

Sit Trinus Honor Unus.

1. Consider the reasons for which praise is due from us to the Eternal Father, both on account of those works which are common to Him with the other Divine Persons, and especially on account of the external benefits of Creation, that is this world, created with so many things for your sake, and the internal benefits, such as your body and soul, with all the natural gifts which you have, and of which many men are deprived. Think over these benefits; rouse yourself to gratitude, and moved thereby, give thanks to the Creator and Preserver of all your blessings.

2. Consider the reasons for which praise and honour are due to Jesus Christ for all His gifts, and for the benefits of redemption, wherein are included His Incarnation, Nativity, His whole life, full of so many good examples, doctrines, and merits, and finally, the death which He endured for your salvation. Having pondered on the greatness of these gifts, esteem them more than you have hitherto done, give thanks, and love Christ as the fountain thereof, with a greater and more intense love than any creature.

3. Consider the reasons for which honour is due to the Holy Spirit, for all His gifts, and for all those which He bestows on the Faithful through the Sacraments and other means, whereby He sanctifies the soul, makes perfect and adorns the powers thereof, and purifies the members and senses of the body.

Weigh well the greatness, abundance, and utility of this benefit, and rouse yourself to the desire of these gifts, with a greater desire indeed than that of merchants for gain, soldiers for victory, ambitious men for honours, and beggars for their food.

4. Consider in what manner praise and honour are to be attributed to the Divine Persons; praise indeed by the mind, and by the application of the mind in vocal prayer, wherein God is praised by words; and honour by deeds, that is by a holy and exemplary life, and by reverence in every place wherein God is present, especially in the Church. Examine how you pay this honour, and if you are wanting in anything, mourn and amend.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the malice of the Pharisees, who watched our Lord Jesus as He "went into the house on the Sabbath day to eat bread."[1] In which act detest (1) the insincerity of perverse worldliness, displaying itself under the form of benevolence, when they invited Him to a banquet, and yet bore malice to Him in their hearts, spitefully observing His acts, that they might slander Him; (2) detest the daring rashness of judging the Guide, the Author, the Master of all sanctity. Hence guard carefully against these two faults, that you may not be double-minded and insincere, even in the smallest matters, and that you watch not others in order to find fault with them. Think also how unbecoming

[1] St. Luke xiv. 1.

this is in a Religious, and correct anything that may have hitherto been defective.

2. Consider the benignity of Christ, Who, unasked, having seen the dropsical man before Him, immediately began to treat with the lawyers regarding his cure. Thank your most merciful Lord for so much charity and compassion, and place yourself before His Divine eyes, with your spiritual diseases showing them to Him with tender affection, and begging their cure, having laid before His Divine Majesty the reasons which may move His Heart more easily to cure you than He cured that dropsical Jew, unbaptized, and, perhaps not believing in Christ.

3. Consider the prudent gentleness of Christ, Who, although He could have immediately cured the dropsical man, would not nevertheless do it, but because He saw through the malignity of the Pharisees, began to ask them—"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?"[2] and showed it to be lawful, by the similitude of those animals which the Jews were wont to draw out of the pit on the Sabbath day, if they happened to have fallen therein. Hence learn, in whatever state you may be, not to act always on your strict rights, but so to proceed in all things as to give as little offence as possible to any one, but as gently as you can, and with all appearance of reason, and not of rashness. See whether you have hitherto acted in this manner, and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

4. Consider the modesty of the Pharisees, although otherwise proud, and not inclined towards Christ. For having heard this similitude of Christ, whereby

[2] St. Luke xiv. 3.

He showed that it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day, they were silent, convinced indeed by the argument of Christ. Hence learn to fly these two evils of contention and pertinacity of behaviour, which make many daringly oppose themselves to known truth, and dispute both in public and private meetings. That you may the more carefully avoid this, examine the reasons which show how mischievous is this fault in every community, not only in Religion, but in the world.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the modesty of Christ, Who, wishing to reprove the Pharisees for choosing the first places, used no sharp words, although He might have done so, but admonished them gently, not blaming them for their past arrogance, but warning them against it for the future—"When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited."[8] Learn hence to abstain as far as you can from bitterness of speech, especially if you have to do with persons who are placed in some high dignity or office, as were the Pharisees; this is no respect of persons, but rather the prudence of the Christian. See whether you observe this, and determine what you have to do for the future.

2. Consider the prudence of Christ, Who, to withdraw the Pharisees from this eagerness for the first places, made use of a human motive, and one that suited with their sentiments, so inclined to pride—

[8] St. Luke xiv. 8.

"Lest perhaps one more honourable than thou be invited by him, and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and then thou begin with shame to take the lowest place." Hence learn this two-fold prudence—(1) That both you and others may be roused to good, not only by spiritual but by human motives; (2) that one must not proceed as it were blindly and rashly with all alike, but accommodate oneself to the comprehension and disposition of each person, for this will bring things to a favourable issue. See what is your own conduct in this respect.

3. Consider how disgraceful is this fault, which Christ remarked in the Pharisees, and how much more unbecoming in a Religious. Having considered the reasons why it is so disgraceful to covet high places, and having examined your own actions in this respect, determine what you have to do for the future.

4. Consider these words of Christ—"Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" and in these words, the examples and the reasons which confirm the truth thereof, so as to excite yourself to a great hatred of pride, and a great love of humility, having noticed of both the acts which you have to avoid and which to adopt.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the term applied by the Holy Spirit to the relations of Christ, calling them "His brethren,"[4] although they were not properly His brethren,

[4] St. Matt. xii. 46.

as He was the only Son of His Virgin Mother. Learn hence never to condemn the words of others as untrue, or inconsiderately, equivocally, obscurely, or imprudently uttered; since you see that if you wish to be a malignant and blasphemous critic, not even the words of God Himself, written at His dictation, can escape malicious criticism, because spoken in a manner different from their meaning, and one not according to the common signification of words and understanding of men. If you have failed in this respect, amend and control your tongue.

2. Consider the humility of Christ's Mother, who, although superior to Christ, inasmuch as He was her Son, and voluntarily submitted Himself to her, yet stood without, wishing to speak with Him, and intruded not presumptuously to converse with her Son. Now if it should happen to you to be compelled to wait without in the street, when you wish to speak with your equal, yea, perhaps with your Superior, and especially if that Superior, or equal, or inferior, knew you to be waiting, as Christ our Lord knew that His Mother was waiting, how would you glow with anger, yea, perhaps go away in your indignation. Learn therefore hence how you should guard yourself against the movements of pride, lest when occasion offers you yield to them.

3. Consider the charity of one of the bystanders, who having seen the need of Christ's Mother to speak to Him, of himself and unasked, told Christ —"Behold they stand seeking Thee." Give thanks in spirit to the soul of this man, wheresoever he may be, because he helped the Mother of God in her need. Embrace and savour with a spiritual kiss and taste this affection of holy benevolence,

and see whether you show it when you see the spiritual or corporal need of any one whatsoever, pointing it out to those who can give help, without waiting to be asked or questioned. Correct what needs correction.

4. Consider the purity of affection of Christ our Lord, Who, although He loved His Mother most tenderly on account of her virtues, yet loved her not with an earthly affection, after the fashion of unmortified men, who love their relations more than they should do. Therefore He said for your example —"Who is My Mother, and who are My brethren?" as though He would say, I have no earthly relations, I feel not the affection of flesh and blood. Examine your affections towards those who are bound to you by ties of blood, or towards others; whether they are like those of Christ, whether founded on virtue, or rather on personal beauty, or youth, or similitude of disposition, and put away quickly what is evil.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider with what posture of body and limbs, with what guard of the senses, with what sentiments of mind, the Mother of our Lord Jesus waited outside to speak to Him; and pondering on all this with tender affection and spiritual relish, and drawing therefrom the savour of her example, compare therewith your gestures, movements, and sentiments, when before prayer, or in prayer, you are waiting to converse with your Lord. See how different you are from the example of the most holy Mother of

God, and determine what you have to avoid for the future.

2. Consider the holy discourtesy of Christ our Lord, Who, although He heard that His Mother was waiting for Him, yet hurried not to call her or bring her in, but addressed His speech to another. Learn hence not to condemn others as discourteous, or proud, or despisers of their neighbour, if they do not call or hasten to meet those who are seeking them, or admit them immediately. For there may be many and grave reasons for this delay in admitting persons. Learn also a necessary prudence, resolve to blame nothing which is not manifestly evil, and correct what may have been amiss in this respect.

3. Consider the Divine charity of your most holy Lord, Who, stretching out His Hand to His disciples, said—"Behold My Mother and My brethren," in which words contemplate with the eyes of your mind the most merciful Heart of our Lord Jesus, and the sentiments of tender love springing up therein towards His disciples, whom He deigned to call His Mother and His brethren. Whence, inflamed with a certain holy envy, desire that you may be rendered worthy of such favour as to be considered by Him as His brother. Congratulate the disciples on this happiness, and beg them to obtain it for you.

4. Consider these most sweet words of Christ our Lord—"Whosoever shall do the will of My Father Who is in Heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother." Consider therein these two things—(1) What it is to do the will of our Heavenly Father; (2) now great is the happiness of being the mother, brother and sister of Christ. Examine whether and how you do the will of God, and whether you deserve

these titles, that you may bewail your faults, and endeavour to be inscribed among the spiritual brethren of your Lord.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the reasons for which either Christ, or the Old and New Testament, according to the various explanations of the holy Fathers, of which you may choose those which suit you best, is called the "Kingdom of Heaven, like to a treasure."[5] And from each of them gather profitable lessons.

2. Consider why this treasure, whatever it may be, is said to be "hidden in a field," not in a garden, a fortress, a palace, or a town; and gather fruit for the amendment of your life.

3. Consider how truly he who has found this treasure ought to hide it, lest it be lost; what it is to hide this treasure; how and wherein it may be hidden; and making application to yourself, see if you have this treasure hidden in your heart and mouth, or whether it be open and accessible to all; and correct what needs correction.

4. Consider how just it is to sell everything with joy, for the sake of the hidden treasure found in the field, and to buy the field wherein it is found. Hence blame yourself for despising and not seeking this treasure, not accepting it when it presents itself, and preferring to retain your own noxious treasures, rather than to deprive yourself of them for the sake of obtaining this treasure; having found which, you find our Lord God Himself, the fountain of all good.

[5] St. Matt. xiii. 44.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the reasons for which the doctrine of the Gospel, understood by Christ our Lord as the Kingdom of Heaven, is "like to a merchant,"[6] comparing the occupations of merchants with the affections which the doctrine of the Gospel seeks for in our souls. And reproach yourself for your hardness in resisting and fighting against God, Who desires to buy you as this pearl, and wishes to lead you to manifold perfection. Wherefore amend for the future.

2. Consider how truly the souls redeemed by Christ's Blood ought to be pearls. Think on the perfections of pearls, and having compared your soul therewith, see whether it be such in the sight of God as to deserve the title and name of pearl, and, indeed, as the Evangelist says, a "good pearl;" and if you find any thing which prevents your soul from being worthy of this name, put it away as quickly and as effectually as you can.

3. Consider by what means the doctrine of the Gospel, represented in this place by a merchant, buys this pearl of your soul, and buys it from you. Various are the modes of this purchase—in reading, in prayer, in sermons, in sufferings, in desirable blessings, in good examples, and in other things, as taught by Christ. See, therefore, whether you show yourself a ready purchaser, and amend what needs amendment.

4. Consider by what means Christ Himself, Whom some consider to be meant by the Kingdom of

[6] St. Matt. xiii. 44.

Heaven, sold all that He had that He might buy this pearl of your soul; and on the other hand, having compared your stinginess with the liberality of Christ, your malice with the benignity of Christ, Who wishes to buy you for your good, detest your hardness and amend.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Magnificat Anima mea Dominum.

1. Consider how the Blessed Virgin magnified God, reflecting on the intensity or ardour of her most vehement affection, on the perfect purity of the end or intention thereof, on the interior and exterior words which proceeded from this vehement affection; and having examined yourself, bewail your contrary defects, and imitate her.

2. Consider on what grounds, or titles, you are bound to magnify or praise God, whether by words, or thoughts, or benefits, or omission of evil-doing. On the other hand, see how you are doing this, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider that to God is due, not any sort of glory whatsoever, but one whereby our whole soul, with all its powers and acts, magnifies Him. See if your soul does this, and endeavour that it should do so.

4. Consider why the Blessed Virgin, wishing to name and magnify God, calls Him not Father, or Creator, or God, or by any other name than Lord; and try to draw profit from this consideration.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the audacity of the Pharisee, who, although he knew that Christ had the gifts of prophecy and of miracles, so much prized by the people, yet dared to approach Christ to tempt Him, and to say—"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"[1] He knew, or could have known, that Christ was not ignorant of this, and that Christ was aware of his insincerity, and that he was not actuated by the wish to learn, but to calumniate, or to test the wisdom of Christ, and His comprehension of the laws; and yet, inspired by a malignant feeling towards Him, he perceives not all this, but dares to tempt Him. And yet he was not one of the rude and common crowd, but a doctor of the law, of deep learning and experience, and a right understanding of things. Hence learn how diligently to be avoided are all sentiments contrary to charity, and which foster aversion and rancour, such as sometimes disfigure even the wisest and most religious persons, and excite them to unworthy acts. Search then into your conscience, whether it be wounded by any such feeling towards your Superiors, or equals, or inferiors, and earnestly shut such feelings out from you, lest they lead you to more serious evils.

2. Consider the meekness of Christ, Who, knowing thoroughly the malice of the rash lawyer, neither by word or deed displayed any sign of anger, but answered him as quietly, readily, and generously, as

[1] St. Matt. xxii. 36.

though the question had come from an excellent mind, eager for instruction. Compare with this the stinging sharpness of your answers, the bitterness of your feelings, gestures, and words, when you are offended by the words of any one. Oh, how beautifully do you the living member of Christ our Lord, imitate the benignity of your Head and Leader! Having observed the occasions and times wherein you have thus failed, purpose amendment, and in the meantime beg pardon for your offences from your most meek Jesus.

3. Consider the first words of that commandment which Christ called "the greatest and the first commandment: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God;" reflecting, according to the second method of prayer given in the Exercises of our holy Father, on the meaning and sense of these words; drawing from them various affections towards God, and lessons for the guidance of your life.

4. Consider the remaining words of this commandment—"With thy whole heart, and with thy whole mind;" thinking what it is to love God with your whole soul, and how you are doing it. If you remark in yourself anything contrary to this commandment of God, either now, or in your past life, detest it heartily, bewail it, purpose satisfaction, and amend for the future; yea, and with a seraphic love, and with a love as similar as may be to that of the Blessed Virgin or of the Humanity of Christ, strive to atone for your past offences.

MONDAY.

1. Consider who is your neighbour, and to whom that name may extend, so as to learn whom you should love. This you will know by considering (1) who is reckoned by God as your neighbour; (2) who is partaker with yourself of the same blessings of God; (3) who is created to the same end as yourself; (4) whether you also wish to be recognized as a neighbour by all men, especially by those who from some cause may be of service to you. Hence you will recognize every man, without exception, to be your neighbour.

2. Consider what it is to love your neighbour. This also you will know by the sincere love which you feel for those dear to you, whether your relations, friends, or others. For true love displays itself in repelling all evil from him you love, in bestowing benefits on him, in joy at his prosperity, grief at his adversity. Thus, while the beloved neither asks nor thinks of it, do they act who truly love him. Whence it follows, that your love should be such towards every one who can be called your neighbour.

3. Consider the nature of the love which Christ commands us to cherish towards any neighbour whatsoever—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Examine therefore how you love yourself, (1) omitting no opportunity of showing forth your love towards yourself, and that more by deeds than by words; (2) seeking also for occasions of loving yourself; (3) shunning all troubles and anxieties;

(4) taking greater care of your own convenience and welfare than of those of others. Whence, if others are to be loved with a like affection to the love of self, it is clearly to be seen what should be done towards your neighbour, and what avoided, so as to fulfil this precept.

4. Consider now diligently, as before God your Judge, (1) whether there be any person, or persons, to whom you do not show that charity which is their due; (2) whether you love them as you love yourself; and deplore your many defects in this matter, especially from the example of Christ, Who has hitherto loved you, unworthy, more than Himself, when yet, according to this precept, if He were bound to love you as Himself, He was not bound to love you more than Himself. Be ashamed then, promise amendment, and practically resolve to act in everything according to that saying dictated by nature itself—"What thou wouldst have done to thyself, do thou to others; what thou wouldst not have done to thee by another, do not thyself to another."

TUESDAY.

1. Consider why the Kingdom of Heaven, that is, the Church, or Evangelical doctrine, is compared to a "net cast into the sea,"[2] and not to a hook, or any other instrument for catching fish; and draw out some pious affections, whether of gratitude towards God for the blessing of your vocation in the Church, or thoughts regarding the amendment of your life.

[2] St. Matt. xiii. 47.

2. Consider that in this net are gathered all kinds of fish, both good and bad. Fear therefore; for it is not enough for salvation to be in the Church, but it is needful to be among the good fish, especially at the time of death. Examine therefore your life very diligently, to see whether it be such that you may hope at the hour of death to be one of the good fish of Christ, to be transferred to a heavenly vessel.

3. Consider why the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of Christ our Lord, more than once gives to men called to faith and salvation by the preaching of the Gospel the name of fish, and the preachers of the Gospel fishers, and gather from the thought some spiritual fruit.

4. Consider that the office of the Angels at the hour of death and at the Day of Judgment will be to separate the good fish from the bad; the latter for destruction, the former for eternal life. Therefore it is needful to take timely heed that the holy Angels be favourable to you, and incline God to be merciful. Think therefore by what means you may gain their favour, and try to procure them.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the first reason for which the present life is justly called a sea. On account, namely, of the various winds and tempests whereby it is agitated, throws men to and fro, and puts them in peril of drowning. Whence learn by what means you should withstand the waves of this sea, lest you should be submerged.

2. Consider the second reason for this application.

Because as the sea cannot be crossed by any one without the external aid either of a ship or a bridge, so also this present life cannot be securely passed by the powers of nature alone, without the assistance of God. Think therefore how you seek these helps from God, and how you use those which He offers you; and if you find any fault in this respect, avoid it in future.

3. Consider the third reason. As the sea has bitter waters, so is this life full of affliction. Whence it follows that the present life should not be clung to with too great an affection, but that our hearts should be fixed on Heaven, wherein are true joys. See if your heart be so fixed on Heaven, and try that it may be so.

4. Consider the fourth reason. As they who remain on the surface of the water are safe as long as they are above it, but not so when they are immersed therein, so they who immerse themselves in worldly business expose their salvation to peril. See if you be of this number, and proceed cautiously.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider why Christ our Lord, or His doctrine, is compared to a merchant seeking nothing but pearls, and gather some fruit, whether of a most tender love towards Christ our Lord, Who seeks you as eagerly as a merchant seeks pearls, or of other holy affections.

2. Consider that any rational soul whatsoever may be called a pearl, having thought over the properties of a pearl as to colour, price, excellence, use, and value. From this high idea of the greatness of your

soul you will see that it is to be treated as so manifold an excellence deserves. Examine whether you have thus treated it, and determine what you have to do in future.

3. Consider the goodness of Christ, Who, to buy this pearl, "sold all that He had, and bought it."[3] Here enumerate what and how many things Christ our Lord sold for your sake, and what He gave to buy you. Conceive hence a great love towards Him and a great desire of corresponding to so much love, both by word and deed.

4. Consider if any precious pearl were endowed with reason and knew itself to be sought for by its Creator, to the end that it should be placed in His palace and His heavenly diadem, how would it not strive to attain this? What obstacles would it not remove? Apply this to yourself. For you there remains a greater felicity than to be in God's diadem. Why therefore do you make no earnest efforts? Why do you appear to care nothing about it? Be ashamed, and amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider that every one of us ought to be, according to his measure, like the "Scribe instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven,"[4] that is, in the Church. Consider the first quality: what is a Scribe, what are his properties and obligations, and having made application to yourself, you will perceive what is wanting in you, and strive for the future to acquire it.

[3] St. Matt. xiii. 46. [4] St. Matt. xiii. 52.

2. Consider the second quality of the Scribe. He must be *instructed*, in order justly to deserve the name. Here also consider how greatly your Order needs in every ministry men of solid learning, lest they cast both themselves and others into the precipice. On the other hand, examine whether you attend to progress in learning with earnest endeavour, toil, and assiduity. If not, think how injurious this is to God, and to your Order which has brought you up with so much care and labour, that by your learning you may spread abroad the glory of God.

3. Consider the third quality of the Scribe. His learning must be such as to deserve the name of a treasure, out of which he bringeth new things and old. Look at your learning, whether it be worthy of this name; and consider what is wanting to you therein, how you may acquire it, and strive to do so, for the honour of God and the profit of your Religion.

4. Consider that there is no one in Religion of such mean abilities, or broken health, as not to be able to acquire in his own degree, if not every kind of erudition and learning, at least such as suits his state, and such as is really solid. And this is enough for any one, so long as he shuns idleness and follows a right order and the direction of his Superiors in the acquisition of certain science. Therefore conceive an ardent desire of acquiring solid learning, imploring the benediction of the Holy Spirit and your Guardian Angel for this purpose.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Et Exultavit Spiritus meus in Deo Salutari meo.

1. Consider with what and how great a joy the most Blessed Virgin was filled, both before and especially after the conception of the Son of God in the flesh. Congratulate her; give thanks to God for having filled her with this joy; and pray that at least in the next life He may fill you also with true joy, since in this life your sins have not deserved it, but rather the opportunity of meriting demands that you live in continual crosses and desolation, for the love and glory of our Lord.

2. Consider the reasons for which we ought to seek, not casual and worldly joys, but spiritual, whereby our spirit may be refreshed. See if you seek such, and try to do so for the future.

3. Consider the evils which come from joy in perishable things, such as is not derived from spiritual and Divine sources, and especially such as is immoderate and excessive. See whether you experience such, and avoid it in future.

4. Consider that God alone is the source of true and full joy, inasmuch as He is our salvation, or the cause thereof. Examine whether God is such to you, and strive that He may be such, so that always by word and deed your spirit may rejoice in God.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider how the most pure and modest Jesus, "entering into a boat, passed over and came into His own city."[1] Wherein consider how He got into the boat and sat therein. Compare with His behaviour your own, in mounting up and in walking; and having noticed in yourself more than one failure in modesty, and considered the reasons you have for avoiding all indecency and immodesty, observe what you should in future avoid, out of reverence for Christ, Who is looking at you from Heaven with His holy Angels.

2. Consider the faith of the Jews who brought to our Lord "one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed."[2] Rejoice in your soul at this esteem of the Jews for the power of Christ. On the other hand, be persuaded that there is a deficiency of faith in you, who, going to Communion and to your prayers, come away with so little profit. Examine and put away the causes of this defect.

3. Consider the manner whereby Christ willed to cure the man sick of the palsy, bestowing on him first of all the remission of his sins—"Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Whence learn that sicknesses are often divinely sent on account of sin, and that we often fall into sickness through excess in the use of creatures, especially of food and drink. Examine yourself therefore, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider that in your soul you are more infirm

[1] St. Matt. ix. 1. [2] St. Matt. ix. 2.

than that palsied man, since he could move, if not his limbs, at least his eyes, look at things, taste, and hear; but you, in that which relates to the supernatural functions of the soul, cannot even say in your mind, "Lord Jesus" without the aid of the Holy Spirit; neither are you capable of any good thought; added to which, you are full of so many spiritual diseases. Place yourself then with great humility and faith before the most holy altar, as before the throne from whence the Heavenly Physician distributes for the healing of many the Flesh and Blood of His most beloved Son. Receive this cure eagerly and fervently, show your wounds and diseases, and beg a remedy.

MONDAY.

1. Consider how Christ returned to Nazareth, His own country, a place of no renown or fame, of which it had been formerly said in contempt, "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?"[3] Thus the most humble Jesus omits nothing whereby, for your sake, He may be humbled. But you—how often do you shun the occasions of humbling yourself, whether in regard of country, race, or other things that are called to mind, and which are of a nature to humble you? And yet you would be considered a member and servant of your King, Who thus abases Himself. Reproach yourself for your excess of pride and conceit, and see how you should behave in future.

2. Consider what Christ did after returning to His own country. "He taught them in their syna-

[3] St. John i. 46.

gogues."[4] Examine what Christ taught them; what precepts He gave them, which were doubtless none other than those which are set forth in the Catechism. For the Jews needed these instructions, not being capable of receiving higher teaching. But you—are you ashamed of explaining to the ignorant, especially in villages and inns, these mysteries, so profitable and necessary? Recognize here, either your zeal, for which thank God, or your pride and tepidity; and amend.

3. Consider how Christ taught in the synagogues; how full He was of modesty, zeal, moderation; how composed were His limbs; how circumspect was His speech, far from all ostentation and anger, so that they who heard it were astonished, saying, "How came this Man by this wisdom and miracles?" See if you behave in like manner when in public, and put away those things contrary to the example of Christ.

4. Consider the words of the Jews regarding Christ —"Is not this the carpenter's Son? His brethren and His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence therefore hath He all these things?" Whence it appears how carefully Christ concealed what He was, and Who was His Father, even in His own country; and yet He had come to make this known by the implanting of a true faith. Deplore your own pride, which boasts most vainly of even what is false, and knows not how to conceal anything good; and learn to humble yourself.

[4] St. Matt. xiii. 54.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the words of Isaias, which Christ, in teaching the Jews, read to them out of the holy Book of the Law—"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me, to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward."[5] Reflect upon each of these words, and gather therefrom sentiments of hope, resolving on what you have to do in order to become a partaker in those gifts, for which Christ our Lord came into the world.

2. Consider why Christ would not, at the petition of the Jews, confirm the truth of the doctrine which He preached by many miracles; but as St. Mark says —"He could not do any miracles there, only that He cured a few that were sick, laying His hands upon them."[6] Here consider that there may not be wanting reasons why our Lord, Who in other places is so liberal, that He is wont, through many of His servants, to confirm the truth of the Catholic faith by miracles, yet does it not in this place. Remark hence how hateful to Christ is the ungrateful incredulity of men, on account of which it was said that, humanly speaking, Christ could work no miracles in Nazareth. See whether there be any impediments in you, and remove them.

3. Consider these words of Christ—"No prophet is accepted in his own country."[7] Would that this

[5] St. Luke iv. 18, 19. [6] St. Mark vi. 5.
[7] St. Luke iv. 24.

were not true in this kingdom, where there is found in many such license of speech that they dare rashly to cavil at, judge, depreciate, and deride even the good and necessary words and actions of their superiors and equals; a thing not seen elsewhere where a greater charity flourishes and a spirit of mutual praise and defence is greatly cherished. See if you are of this number, which you may perhaps discover if you examine yourself thoroughly. Think therefore how mischievous it is with this serpent's tongue to spare no one, not even the hidden purposes of others; and seriously amend.

4. Consider the insult offered to Christ, when they thrust Him out of the city, and would have cast Him down from the brow of the hill; all of which was nevertheless endured by Christ most modestly, both in mind and tongue. But you—how often do you burn with anger, even against your Superiors, when you are deservedly disturbed, whether for faults which they reprove, or for others which have gone unpunished. And yet you would be considered an imitator and disciple of Christ, and profess yourself to have come into Religion for the purpose of suffering for Christ, and of walking in the narrow path to Heaven.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the obedience of Christ's disciples, whom "He obliged to go up into the boat, and to go before Him,"[8] and who, at Christ's command, although at the perilous time of night, sailed away.

[8] St. Matt. xiv. 22.

Hence you may learn to attack difficulties, even accompanied by danger, when you are commanded to do so. Think how glorious this is, if done for God's sake, and how profitable. Animate yourself to undertake arduous things, and on the other hand see how you are flying even from their shadows; and be ashamed.

2. Consider the charity of Christ, Who, seeing the boat tossed about by the winds, mercifully hastens to them, and causes them to arrive speedily at their destination. Here take occasion to examine why it is that you feel not as speedily in yourself this Divine aid, coming to the rescue in your needs, whatever they may be; and strive to remove the obstacles you may find.

3. Consider St. Peter's doubts, whereby, when he walked upon the sea, he began at last to sink, losing the fervour of his trust. Learn hence not to rely on your own strength, and to tremble lest you sink under temptation, and fall into those sins to which at other times you are liable, and which formerly overwhelmed you or other incautious souls. Think therefore what you should do to avoid a return to them.

4. Consider the assistance which Christ gave to Peter, not before, but after He heard these eager words—"Lord, save me!" Having fixed these these words in your memory, use them henceforward frequently, and consider that the best and easiest way of obtaining Divine help, and accomplishing the affair of salvation, is ardent prayer to God, or the ardent endeavour to pray. See whether this earnestness is in yourself, and having cast away your torpor, rouse yourself, and beg pardon of God

because you so shun converse with Him, as though it were a bitter thing, instead of something of supreme necessity to you.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the piety of certain women healed by Christ, who joined Him as He preached with His disciples, and "ministered unto Him of their substance,"[9] amongst whom was Mary Magdalene herself. Therefore compassionate Christ, reduced to this poverty for your sake; thank them heartily for ministering to Christ's needs; and wish by Christ's example, that often it may happen to you for His sake to suffer discomforts in this state of poverty. See if you bear such willingly, and consider what it becomes you to endure.

2. Consider how right and profitable it was, yea, in a manner how necessary, at least for gratitude's sake, that these holy women, on account of greater benefits received by Christ, should meet His wants by ministering of their substance. Burn therefore with a great desire of giving to Christ all that you can of the things which He has bestowed on you, thinking over all the human and Divine reasons which should urge you to do this in the best manner possible.

3. Consider with what dignity and decorum Christ and His Apostles behaved, as well towards these pious women as towards the men of their company. Thus there are not wanting to you various examples, by which you may learn how to act when in the

[9] St. Luke viii. 3.

company of seculars with whom you have to carry on business, whether in missions, or in brief conversations, or in assemblies. Examine therefore whether your behaviour be such as it ought to be, and in future avoid what should be avoided.

4. Consider how Christ and His companions journeyed from town to town; how they walked, whether hastily or slowly; with what guard of the senses, movements of the hands, posture of the body, tone of the voice, and the like; and from each action draw a lesson for the reformation of your own similar actions.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the multiplied necessity in the world, which required the great help of Evangelical preachers, for which cause Christ our Lord said—"The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few."[10] On the other hand consider also the multiplied necessity which there is now in the world, corrupt as it is in almost every state of life, and in need of the great helps of Evangelical labourers. Whence excite in yourself an ardent desire of helping men in the world by the ministrations of your Order, according to its end and measure.

2. Consider how few Christ our Lord chose for overcoming this vast machine of the world, fenced in by so many sins and errors; how of old, a few holy men subdued by their words entire kingdoms and provinces to Christ our Lord. Examine therefore into the reasons why at this time there are so

[10] St. Matt. ix. 37.

many ministers of Christ our Lord for the preaching of the Gospel, with so few conversions and so little fruit. And see whether you are not of their number, who occupy space, and hardly spend as much labour for the help of a perishing world as their mere food and sustenance demand of them.

3. Consider the provision wherewith Christ sent away the Apostles to preach the Gospel—"Take nothing for your journey, neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither have two coats."[11] On the other hand, examine the material wherewith you provide yourself, or desire to be provided, in more easy circumstances, in more convenient journeys and lodgings, in more trifling labours and necessities, and see whether you are pressing on in the footsteps of the Apostles. Be ashamed, especially acknowledging yourself to enjoy far more comforts in your journeys than do men of the world, although nobler and richer than you; and yet you are vowed to poverty, and had left the world to imitate Christ.

4. Consider the subject of the first preaching of the Apostles—"Preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."[12] Exult therefore that you are born in a time when the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Think how easy it is to acquire it, even by giving a little water to the poor. See whether and how eagerly you are desiring the acquisition of this Kingdom, and in it a high place; whether you are more earnest and desirous thereof than of bodily comfort, progress in learning, leisure, recreations, &c. Be ashamed before God, deplore your blindness, and amend.

[11] St. Luke ix. 3. [12] St. Matt. x. 7.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Quia respexit Humilitatem Ancillæ Suæ.

1. Consider how greatly God is pleased by humility or voluntary abasement, which in the Blessed Virgin, by the gift of God, was the occasion or cause of her becoming truly and naturally the Mother of God. Having well considered the greatness of this benefit, acknowledge the excellence of humility, that you may be inflamed with a great love thereof.

2. Consider wherein the Blessed Virgin displayed this humility, both inwardly and outwardly, and wherein you also should display it in imitation of her, and try to attain this, having bewailed your contrary faults.

3. Consider the disposition peculiar to souls that love God; oblivious of the natural and supernatural talents which they have received from God, they think of themselves as though they had them not; thus the Blessed Virgin, although the Mother of God, called herself His handmaid, and not His Mother. Compare your actions with these; bewail the difference, and amend.

4. Consider how happy will be your soul, if truly worthy to be called the handmaid of our Lord. See what is necessary for this end; try to procure it, and in order to succeed, invoke the Queen of these handmaids of our Lord.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the wonderful love of the King of Heaven towards the human race Who vehemently desiring to unite our souls to His only-begotten Son by a spiritual marriage, through true faith, lively charity, and other gifts, often sends His servants to invite us, not only to the wedding-feast, but to the contracting of this spiritual marriage. On the other hand, examine whether you entertain such sentiments towards this Heavenly Spouse, as men do who are about to enter into marriage, or to be present at the marriage of their friends. Blush deeply before the Divine Majesty, and blame your ingratitude and blindness, who when you might be partaker of such happiness as that of being the spouse of the Son of God, are unmoved by the desire thereof.

2. Consider the obstacles on account of which those who were invited to the wedding refused to come—"They went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandize,"[1] which obstacles were indeed of some consequence. But you who have no impediments, nay, who live in a state of life full of assistances, free from all hindrances, why do you refuse to obey God, Who calls you to a spiritual marriage, offering you a great dowry, and promising you the richest possessions and delights beyond all the pleasures of the world?

3. Consider the impious ingratitude of some who were invited, when they insulted and put to death the King's servants who came to invite them. Like

[1] St. Matt. xxii. 5.

to this is the conduct of those who criticise, condemn, refuse to hear, and even calumniate their Superiors and Ecclesiastics who urge them to the perfect service of God, and by the accustomed means force them on to perfection, who give way to a blind anger, not recognizing the benefactors who are leading them on to the acquisition of great happiness. Detest this ingratitude, and if there be anything to amend in yourself also, amend it.

4. Consider the words said on that occasion respecting the invited who would not come to the wedding—"Many are called, but few are chosen," and diligently examine whether there be in you the marks which a right reason, enlightened by faith and the instructions of spiritual men, may prove to be marks of vocation, together with election to eternal glory. Treat with great fear this matter of salvation, and take pains to be not only one of the called, but one of the chosen.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the first quality of Christ's disciples, as comprised in these words—"Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."[2] Consider yourself therefore as a sheep surrounded everywhere by wolves. Think that it is your duty to behave like sheep of Christ, and see what you have to do in order to live secure from the attacks of wolves.

2. Consider the second quality of Christ's disciples—"Be ye therefore wise as serpents," reflecting wherein consists the prudence of the serpent, and applying the lesson to your own instruction.

[2] St. Matt. x. 16.

3. Consider the third quality—"Be ye simple as doves," and wherein this simplicity of the dove displays itself, so that you may imitate it, and shun all contrary defects.

4. Consider the admonition of Christ, so necessary to all who live in community—"Beware," He says, "of men." Think of whom you should beware; when and why; lest you experience to your loss the truth of the proverb—"Man is wolf to man."

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the prediction of many tribulations to come—"They will deliver you up in councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues, and you shall be brought before governors and before Kings for My sake."[3] Prepare yourself also for false accusations and punishments, and for the various evils that arise from a wicked tongue, considering the reasons which should make you desire them, and endure them with a serene and joyful mind.

2. Consider the consolation promised by Christ for the time of adversity—"When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak, for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." From which words conceive a great hope of the Divine help which will come to you whenever you suffer innocently; trust in God, and cast yourself always upon His Providence, for He will not fail you, but sooner or later will help you, as is plain from the examples of Joseph, Daniel, and other servants of God. Think on these things

[3] St. Matt. x. 17, 18.

with tender affection, and arm yourself for future events.

3. Consider the domestic troubles to be feared and guarded against—"The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the son, and the children shall rise up against their parents, and shall put them to death." Therefore take diligent heed that you come not to such a state as to rise up against your own friends, by murmuring, falsely accusing, exaggerating injuries, and sowing discord; and because no one grows wicked all at once, see that you begin not from very small things.

4. Consider the great gift of God bestowed on the servants of Christ—"You shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake." Which words will give occasion for you to thank Christ for calling you to an Order which is hated by many; and at the same time rouse you to live free from human respect when there is a question of offending God and breaking Religious discipline. For this reason it is that "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;"[4] because they will not omit what should not be omitted and they will do what should be done, and this irritates and excites evil men to rise up against the good who are doing their duty well. See whether you are of this number, and strive in future to do all you should do.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the words of Christ—"He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."[5] Examine

[4] 2 Tim. iii. 12. [5] St. Matt. x. 22.

whether your life be such as to give hope of perseverance, which you may know by considering whether you employ those means which conduce to perseverance, such as the flight of sin and its occasions, the custody of the senses, the maceration of the flesh, candid manifestation of yourself, the right use of the Sacraments, diligent meditation, and a great union with the Divine Majesty.

2. Consider these words—"The disciple is not above the master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord."[6] Reflecting a little on these words, and impressing them on your mind, knowing yourself to be a servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, and His disciple, examine whether you are willing to be treated in respect to food, clothing, habitation, labours, watchings, adversities, &c., as He was treated during three-and-thirty years for our example, and learn what follows from this.

3. Consider these words—"For nothing is covered that shall not be revealed, nor hid that shall not be known."[7] This may be the meaning thereof—that all our actions will be made known to those from whom we unrighteously conceal them. Be we willing or unwilling, at length Divine Providence will discover in the course of time all things, when we least expect it, and in a manner that we think not of, as daily experience teaches. Therefore every habit of concealing our actions is to be detested; but rather, after the manner of the sick, we should disclose all to our physcians, lest by the coming up of the diseased blood, our wound should putrify and bring death.

[6] St. Matt. x. 24, 25. [7] St. Matt. x. 26.

Wherefore, if there be anything sinful in this respect, let it be cured by a sincere manifestation.

4. Consider in these words—"Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him that can destroy both soul and body into hell," that we are taught to fear offending God more than offending men. Having examined the reasons thereof, correct your folly, which makes more account of human than of Divine judgments, and fears the eye of men more than the eye of God penetrating the most hidden secrets of the mind. Amend for the time to come.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider God's wonderful care of us—"Not one sparrow shall fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, better are you than many sparrows."[8] Having pondered on these words with tender affection and relish, thank the Divine Majesty for such great care of you. Burn with love towards so great a Divine Providence; kiss and embrace in spirit this so merciful Heart of your Lord; and offer Him in return your mind, prepared to spread His Divine worship in yourself and others.

2. Consider the powerful inducements to put away from you all human respect, for the sake of which you are ashamed to do certain things which should be done, and to omit what should be omitted—"Everyone therefore that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father Who

[8] St. Matt. x. 29, 30.

is in Heaven. But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in Heaven."[9] Strive therefore in future to please God rather than men, and as though you were going to martyrdom and to open confession of faith, rouse yourself to an heroic mortification of this human respect, by proposing to yourself certain actions to be performed at certain times.

3. Consider the necessity of mortifying this respect of friends, on account of which we are not ashamed to offend God Himself—"I came not to send peace, but the sword. For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's enemies shall be they of his own household."[10] In which last words there is serious cause for preferring respect of God to all human respect, which latter is both hostile and pernicious, especially as these following words of Christ are true—"He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me."

4. Consider the usefulness of adversity, and the evil brought about by shunning the Cross of Christ —"He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for Me shall find it." Therefore, having aroused your affections by these motives, strive to love the trials of this life, and the loss of all esteem and every comfort for Christ's sake.

[9] St. Matt. x. 32, 33. [10] St. Matt. x. 34—36.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the utility of benefits bestowed on our neighbour—"He that receiveth you, receiveth Me."[11] Hence exists in yourself a great desire and as it were a spiritual avarice, to please and to do good to your brethren in all things, as far as conscience and Religious discipline permit, and to do it under the very eye of Christ our Lord, looking at Him in each action. See how you have done this hitherto, and strive earnestly to do it in future.

2. Consider the wonderful facility, greater than all human facility, with which we may acquire as it were infinite treasures and degrees of eternal glory, ever higher and higher, in Heaven—"Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward."[12] As therefore you have constant opportunities of doing as many things, and things more agreeable to God than giving a cup of cold water, acknowledge your blindness in not seeing and seizing hold of so many opportunities of accumulating rewards. Resolve then in future to show the greatest diligence in this matter, and like a merchant, seek for perpetual treasures in Heaven.

3. Consider the indifference of Christ as to His place of abode, for having finished His discourse to His disciples, He bound Himself to no place, to no fixed residence, but went about to various towns, preaching therein each time to new hearers, and His

[11] St. Matt. x. 40. [12] St. Matt. x. 42.

disciples likewise went round to different houses, preaching the Gospel everywhere. Learn hence to cling to no one place or habitation, but to be ready for every part of the world.

4. Consider what was the preaching of the disciples after they had left Christ—"That men should do penance."[13] Examine why they began with the preaching of penance, and see whether such preaching be not necessary for you also, already converted as you are to God. Lest such be necessary, strive so to live as to have more cause for thanksgiving than penance.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Ecce enim ex hoc Beatam Me dicent Omnes Generationes.

1. Consider the first reason for which the Blessed Virgin deserves to be called "Blessed." For God looked upon her from all eternity, predestinating her to the highest glory in Heaven. Thank our Lord for this grace bestowed on her; adore the Heart of God, so generous towards your Mother and Lady; reflect on the greatness of the gift; desire it in due measure, and pray to our Lady that you may be one of the predestinated.

2. Consider the second reason for which the Blessed Virgin deserves to be called "Blessed." For she alone of the daughters of Adam, begotten after the ordinary manner, was free from original sin. Think over the magnitude of this benefit,

[13] St. Mark vi. 12.

considering the example of St. Mechtilda, to whom God revealed that she had been in serious danger of death at her birth, and on that account had been the more speedily brought to Baptism, so that thus she obtained the grace of God sooner than others. And you who have acquired the grace of God late, and perhaps have often lost it, mourn, be ashamed, and beg through the merits of the Blessed Virgin that you may ever live and grow in the grace of God.

3. Consider the third reason for which the Blessed Virgin deserves to be called "Blessed." For she alone, among mere creatures, never offended God by actual sin. Compare your life with hers, humble yourself, bewail your many sins, and see how you ought to imitate her, so as to preserve your soul pure from sin.

4. Consider the fourth reason for which the Blessed Virgin deserves to be called "Blessed." On account of the plenitude of all the gifts of grace suited to her state. Enumerate and ponder over these, so as to conceive a great esteem of her, and to burn with an immense desire of possessing many exalted gifts of God, and of giving Him thereby some small pleasure and consolation. Examine what you should do and avoid to attain this end, and dispose yourself thereto, invoking the aid of this most holy Virgin.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider your folly, who like the ruler seeking from Christ the cure of his sick son, are more eager for the cure of your bodily ailments than for the

means of healing your soul, which is troubled by various diseases. Having thought over the reasons which should make the health of the soul be attended to at least as much as that of the body, see what you have to do for the future.

2. Consider another folly of worldlings, who are more moved by miracles than by solid virtues, like those of whom Christ said—"Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not,"[1] although virtue is a greater and more necessary gift of God. Yet many would rather see Christ, or some Saint, than have to suffer any thing; they are more drawn by marvels than by solid virtues. See how it is with you; correct yourself, and inflame your mind to the pursuit of solid virtues, having found out the reasons which should urge you thereto.

3. Consider your hardness, when having heard of so many miracles of Christ and His Saints, you apprehend so coldly the truths for whose confirmation they were wrought: and show so little care for them, as though they were not certain and Divinely proved. Consider this in special cases, such as the certainty of the severe punishments of Purgatory for any sin whatsoever, the Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and other mysteries of the Christian religion: and in future endeavour so to live as one practically believing all the things which have been confirmed through Divine miracles by Christ and His servants.

4. Consider the foolish incredulity of the ruler, who, although he thought that his son could be healed by Christ, yet did not immediately believe Christ when He said—"Go thy way, thy son liveth," but only believed when he heard from his servants

[1] St. John iv. 48.

that his son was cured. How often do you the same, when you are more ready to believe your ignorant companions than others more worthy of trust, if the former say things pleasing to you. How often do you prefer the bad advice or example of others to the inspirations of God withdrawing you from such evils. Herein you show by your practice that you believe these more than God, Who would draw you by inward inspirations from those bad examples. Blush therefore before the Blessed Sacrament, which you are now about to receive; beg pardon, and promise amendment.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the happiness of St. John the Baptist, who, on reproving Herod for taking his brother's wife, was bound and cast into prison. Wherein reflect on two things—(1) What a great good it is to suffer grievously for good works, and hence conceive a desire thereof; (2) how weak you are, who for all your sins refuse to suffer things less grievous than chains and a prison. Purpose then to do that which you shall see to be your duty.

2. Consider the reason for which John was thrown into prison; no other than Herod's impure love of his brother's wife. Whence learn that a great portion of our sins arise from the love of something evil, or the too great love of something not evil in itself. See if such be found in you, and having recognized the great dangers hence arising, resolve to cast off all excessive love for anything.

3. Consider the motive which restrained Herod from putting John to death—namely, the fear of the people, who held John for a prophet. Hereupon reflect on your own actions; how often you refrain from evil only through the fear of men, without which fear you would not hesitate to offend God. Consider how unworthy and impious a thing it is to fear the eyes, judgments, and vexations of men more than the eyes, judgments, and punishments of God. Be thoroughly ashamed therefore, beg God's pardon, and promise amendment.

4. Consider the beheading of St. John—how patiently, willingly, joyfully, that most innocent man offered himself up to it. And you indeed, laden and stained with so many sins in the world and in Religion, on account whereof, as well as of your daily venial faults, you deserve so much greater a punishment, acknowledge how often you refuse every kind of mortification and pain. And great is your imprudence, for you reserve yourself far more severe punishment in the other life, and deprive yourself of matter for great merit, not discerning all that your sins deserve. Amend therefore.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the faith of the Jewish people, who followed and honoured Christ as a great Prophet, although this was offensive to the Chiefs of the Synagogue, "because they saw the miracles which He did."[2] Acknowledge hence the faith of the people, and reproach yourself, who, endowed with a

[2] St. John vi. 2.

better faith, knowing yet more of the miracles and Divine works of Christ, with His excellence, and having the hope of rewards offered by Him, do not display this same affection and constancy towards your Lord existing sacramentally in the Church, and are not able to spend a shorter time than that given by the Jews who followed Christ, without great weariness and relapse into the thought of worldly matters. When you have considered how disgraceful this is, and how much to be avoided, purpose amendment.

2. Consider the solicitude of Christ our Lord for the feeding of the multitude—"Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?"[8] Rest with interior joy of spirit upon this solicitude, tasting it with a spiritual taste, inhaling therefrom a spiritual fragrance. Then thank Christ for this solicitude, and conceive a great hope of His heavenly assistance, anticipating even your necessities. It will be for you not to impede by your sins the influx of Christ's grace prepared for all; but rather, by cooperating therewith, to merit its acceleration and continual increase. See how it is with you, and do what is needful.

3. Consider the humility of Christ, Who, wishing to feed five thousand men, and having no bread, created none miraculously, although He could have done so, but was content with a lesser miracle, namely, the multiplication of bread procured by ordinary means. Learn hence to hide the gifts of God, where obedience or a necessary charity do not compel you to display them by ordinary acts; and much more learn not to put them forth idly, nor to

[8] St. John vi. 5.

attribute to yourself more than is your due of ability, or anything else. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and cut off what needs to be removed.

4. Consider the prudence of Christ, Who although He knew whence bread could be supplied, yet, as if ignorant, asked it of Philip, rather than of the first among the disciples. This teaches us to ask advice even from those who appear to be our inferiors, and never to trust to ourselves. Examine the reasons of this; and having reproached yourself for your pride and deplored the evils that arise therefrom, purpose amendment.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the end for which Christ said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread?" It was, namely, to draw from him what he thought. Oh, how often God tries us, of Himself, and by men, to see how prompt we are to the love of good and the avoiding of evil, just as He did with Abraham, when He ordered him to sacrifice his son! Now if it is disgraceful not to obey God even when He tries us, how much more when He asks anything of us, whether by Himself or by His ministers? On the contrary, it is glorious to obey Him in everything, at the slightest sign of His will. See if you do this, and take care to do it for the future.

2. Consider the frugality of Christ, of His disciples, and of the Jews. Of Christ indeed, Whom we never read to have supplied other food for satisfying hunger than such as was easily prepared, as bread, fish, or honey; and of the multitude, who found nothing

more delicious than bread and two fishes. Here take occasion to detest and deplore the vile excesses of your gluttony, whether in seeking for things not necessary and too luxurious, or in using too freely what is really necessary, as well as in murmuring and being sad if you are unable to satisfy your greedy palate. See how unbecoming this is in one who has renounced the delights of the world for the sake of a greater cross; and determine wherein you should amend.

3. Consider the tenderness of Christ, Who, being about to feed that pious multitude, would have them take their refreshment in comfort, not standing, but sitting down. "Make the men sit down." Wherein consider with tender affection the paternal charity of Christ, and see whether there be in you the same merciful compassion regarding the necessities of your neighbour. Rouse yourself to show a similar kind-hearted cheerfulness towards others; and try to avoid all moroseness and inhumanity.

4. Consider the modesty of Christ, Who, wishing the multitude to sit down and take their food in comfort, would not order them Himself, but through His disciples, thereby studying both their own pious bashfulness and His own. For good men are ashamed to sit down in the presence of another man of great dignity; and Christ, Who was full of virginal modesty, would not even look at them. Examine into your own immodesty on so many occasions; bewail it; and earnestly endeavour to amend, since you are indeed a member of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit, one from whom should be far removed a bold face, immodest eyes, and a mind without bashfulness. If there be anything to correct in this respect, correct it.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the devotion of Christ, Who, when about to multiply the loaves and distribute them to the hungry multitude, blessed them previously, which the Sacred Text calls giving thanks. With what reverence, with what sentiments of mind should you enter upon your actions, when the Son of God commences His in so holy a manner. Examine now your own works. Hardly any will you find fortified by previous prayer; and so it is not wonderful that you are full of faults. Resolve then to offer to God in the odour of sweetness, your principal actions, seasoned by a short but ardent prayer.

2. Consider the sentiments of Christ during the giving of thanks; how ardent they were; how pure, both in themselves and in respect to their end. And turning to your own actions, examine your confessions and communions; bewail their tepidity, aridity, distractions, irreverence, sleepiness, weariness, omissions; and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider how Christ Jesus, with His virginal hand, distributed bread and portions of fish to the multitude on the ground; with what glance of the eye, movement of the hands, form of words, composure of face, motion of the feet, posture of the whole body? Examine the similar actions of your own limbs, whether in serving those who are seated at table, or when occupied in the kitchen, or when walking, or when engaged with externs; and conform yourself to the example given you by Christ.

4. Consider Christ's love of poverty when He commanded, "Gather up the fragments that remain,

lest they be lost." Here examine diligently how many things perish, or are destroyed, through your fault, or are distributed to those to whom they do not belong, in food, or in what relates to the care of the body or in other things belonging to the furniture of the house; by all of which the essence, or perfection and splendour of Religious poverty are not seldom, and, not slightly injured. Having noticed therefore your defects, which are to be corrected either by sincere confessions or by the obtaining of leave from your Superior, or by both means, act cautiously in future.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the obedience of Christ's disciples, who, when commanded to gather up the fragments of the loaves and fishes, collected everything, and filled twelve baskets, with exactitude, without carelessness, leaving no fragments ungathered. On the other hand, be ashamed at your slothful negligence in many things which are ordered either by your Superiors or by your rules; and having examined the principal actions wherein you are negligent, amend in earnest.

2. Consider the temperance of the Jewish multitude, who, although hungry, took not all the food offered by Christ, but partook of it so temperately, that there remained twelve baskets full of fragments. Examine your own eager manner of rushing at your food, and the quantity you eat, whether at your own table, or that of another, with no respect of God, no bashfulness, no care of your conscience; and yet

you are a Religious, bound to a higher perfection than those poor Jews. Nevertheless, as the saying is, "after the manner of courtiers, thou livest as a Bacchanalian."

3. Consider the quality of the bread given by Christ to the multitude: barley loaves, as says the Evangelist. Bread such as this Christ furnishes at His banquet, and indeed multiplies it miraculously; but He works no miracle to change the quality and to make it wheat instead of barley. Examine and see whether you would be content with such a banquet, although you wish to be considered a servant of Christ our Lord, His soldier, His imitator, a despiser of the world, a lover and follower of the narrow way leading to Heaven, and as one who is making satisfaction for sins committed. Blush therefore; detest your gluttony in seeking dainty food, and correct your habits.

4. Consider the humility of Christ, Who, foreseeing that they would endeavour to make Him King, utterly refused the honours. For (1) "He fled;" (2) "He fled into the mountain," where there was difficulty of access, and a greater facility of hiding Himself; (3) He fled "alone,"[4] not choosing even to have one of His disciples, whose pious affection might point Him out, and make Him a candidate for the throne. See whether you in like manner shun honours and specious titles; and having bewailed your pride, choose something whereby you may display a solid humility even in the eyes of men.

[4] St. John v. 15.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Quia Fecit mihi Magna.

1. Consider the great gifts which God bestowed on the Blessed Virgin in her body, whether natural, such as health, perfection of her limbs and senses, or supernatural, such as the perfect obedience of the body to the soul, the singular control and extinction of the *fomes*, with the restraint of all inordinate emotions, which perfection never existed in any mere creature. Admire this harmony and peculiar temperament in the body of the Blessed Virgin; thank God for it; be ashamed of the great dissimilarity of your own body; and having invoked the help of God, try to make your own body as like as possible to that of the Blessed Virgin.

2. Consider the great gifts of God conferred on the soul of the Blessed Virgin; whether natural, such as acuteness of mind, ripeness of judgment, swiftness in the interior operations of her soul, capacity for the apprehension and conception of many different things; or supernatural, as for example, complete immunity from all sin, the abundance and continual increase of habits of grace, with the plenitude of all virtues. Admire and praise these gifts; give thanks for them; and comparing them with your own vileness, be ashamed, and aspire to the like as far as you can by the grace of God.

3. Consider the great gifts of God conferred on the Blessed Virgin while yet in the flesh, with respect to the holy Church of God; for she was the fountain

from whence arose the Author of our salvation in the flesh to accomplish the work of our redemption. Think upon the excellence of this benefit; give thanks for it; and see how you are profiting by the good things from this fountain.

4. Consider the great benefits which God conferred on the Blessed Virgin in Heaven, with respect to the Church militant and triumphant; for her glory surpasses all the Heavenly Choirs, and she more than any other assists the Church militant. Congratulate her on so much happiness; and consider what you should avoid or do in order to obtain her help.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider by how many debts you are bound to the Heavenly King, Who will demand an account of them from you in due time. Now your debts are two-fold: first, your sins, which you should redeem by a due satisfaction, grief, hatred, and confession; secondly, the gifts of our Lord, for which you should make return by gratitude and a good use thereof. Hence recognize practically what you have to do, lest you have to bear the just penalty of unredeemed debts.

2. Consider the reasons which should induce us to pay our debts to the Heavenly King. First, He knows all things—nothing can be hidden from Him; secondly, after death He forgives no debt, but punishes with rigid justice, and demands satisfaction; thirdly, He utterly hates sin. Hence inquire by what means you may now render this Judge favourable to you, lest you fall under His judgment.

3. Consider the clemency of this Heavenly King, and His readiness to forgive debts; for the confession only of the debts, performed in a due manner, is sufficient to obtain pardon. Admire the mercy of God; thank Him with the deepest affection for having left so easy and accessible a remedy, and one so necessary for so many evils. See your defects in receiving it—your insincerity, palliations, equivocations, aridity in confession; and amend them.

4. Consider that one of the means whereby God is inclined more easily to forgive your sins, is your ready forgiveness of the offences of your neighbour. This is what Christ means in the parable of to-day, when He says—"Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou, then, have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?"[1] See, then, how you behave in the forgiveness of injuries, and how just it is that you, who in many things sin against your God and others, should forgive them. Offer, lastly, to the Holy Sacrament this firm will of forgiving all things to all men, just as He forgives your many defects.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the foolish judgment of the Pharisees, who were scandalized because they saw Christ's disciples eating with unwashed hands. Oh, how often do you imitate the judgments of the Pharisees, in condemning the deeds of others without just cause. Examine therefore what is your behaviour in this respect; and purpose amendment.

[1] St. Matt. xxiii. 32, 33.

2. Consider the folly of the Pharisees, who, in order to observe the traditions of their ancestors, neglected the precepts of God; and having considered the enormous folly of this in itself, reflect upon your own actions, and see whether you also do not often omit things prescribed by God, either in your rules, or in other ways, partly on account of less necessary occupations, and partly through human respect. Consider how disgraceful and unworthy this is; bewail your folly, and as it were contempt of the Divine Majesty; beg pardon of your Lord, and having observed those things on account of which you depart from the precepts of the Divine will, strive seriously to amend.

3. Consider those words of Isaias applied by Christ to the Jews—"This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me."[2] Wherein take heed: first, that they be not perchance applied to you also, who in prayer honour God with your lips, thinking in your heart of other things, and turning towards them the affection of your heart; secondly, that you be not perchance one of those who honour not God even with their lips. These are they who, praying with their voice, recite not their prayers fully, eat up their words, and so hurry their prayers, that they leave out much which they ought to recite, either by the command of the Church, or the custom of their Order. Be ashamed therefore; beg pardon of God, and amend.

4. Consider the other words of Christ—"Every plant which My Heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up,"[3] that is, he shall fall away, either from the Catholic faith, or from a good life, or

[2] St. Matt. xv. 8. [3] St. Matt. xiii. 13

from the Religious state. Consider here what a great evil it is to be rooted up from the garden of God. Examine whether there be anything in you which may cause you to fear lest you, too, are about to be rooted up; and still more, consider what are those things which may consolidate the roots of faith, virtue, and the Religious state. Beg them from your Lord, that you may here grow in the odour of sweetness towards God, and may be transferred to Heaven.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the ardent desire of the Canaanite woman for the cure of her sick daughter, on which account, although Christ would not have His entrance into the house to be known, He could not hide it from the Canaanite woman, who immediately began to look for Him. Blame your own tepidity in seeking less ardently than she did for the cure of others, and even for your own cure. Consider why the remedies for spiritual diseases are yet more eagerly to be sought for; choose especially those which are the most efficacious, and resolve on something definite for your future amendment.

2. Consider the manner in which the Canaanite woman adored Christ—"She fell down at His feet,"[4] "and adored Him,"[5] when she could not be heard crying out from afar. If, therefore, in seeking the cure of another, this Gentile woman with so much reverence prayed to Christ, Whom she did not know as you know Him, how great is your presumption,

[4] St. Mark vii. 25. [5] St. Matt. xv. 25.

who adore Christ without such reverence, both in the Church and in your own chamber. Blush therefore that you, a Religious, are surpassed by a Gentile woman; beg pardon most humbly for your irreverence.

3. Consider the tender artifice of Christ our Lord, Who, to give occasion for greater merit, and to make known the virtue of the Canaanite woman, answered not at first to her cry, and when she drew nearer, made as though He would deny her request, saying—"It is not good to take the bread of the children," that is, the gifts prepared for the children of God, "and to cast it to the dogs,"[6] that is, to the heathen. Let this action of Christ console you in these miseries of yours, which even by ardent prayer you are not able to put away. The most merciful Jesus dissimulates, that you by accumulating your prayers, may accumulate your merits, which merits are often more for your good than those things which you ask of Him. Wait therefore for our Lord and hope in Him, for He never forsakes those who seek Him.

4. Consider the humility of the pious Canaanite woman, who was not offended when she heard herself called by the harsh name of dog, but rather took occasion for more effectual prayer—"Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the tables of their masters." By which humble and pious answer the Heart of our Lord was so touched that He said to her—"O woman, great is thy faith, be it done to thee as thou wilt,"[7] "for this saying, go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter."[8] Delight yourself inwardly with this pious answer of

[6] St. Matt. xv. 26.
[7] St. Matt. xv. 28.
[8] St. Mark vii. 29.

the good mother; taste with a spiritual relish this her holy affection, and think within yourself how much the most merciful Heart of your Lord may be moved by your heroic affections and works. See therefore whether such be in you; see what they should be in future, and whereof they should consist, that you may obtain what you are in need of.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the first words of the Canaanite woman, in commending to Christ our Lord her daughter, who was grievously troubled by an unclean spirit—"Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil."[9] Ponder on these words according to the second method of prayer prescribed in the Exercises; gather therefrom various affections, and apply each one to yourself, adopting the sentiments of the Canaanite woman in asking from Christ the cure of your diseases.

2. Consider the intercession of the Apostles for the Canaanite woman—"Send her away, for she crieth after us." In which intercession, examine what circumstances induced the Apostles to intercede for her, and see whether they are in you, that you may hope likewise for their intercession.

3. Consider the answer of Christ to the Apostles —"I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel." Wherein consider two things of great moment—(1) If Christ, Who was not sent except to save the Israelites, left the Hebrew people

[9] St. Matt. xv. 22.

in their errors, and betook Himself to the salvation of the Gentiles, do not you triumph before victory, although you may be in a state to which is annexed, more than to any other, the hope of salvation, but make your vocation sure by good works; (2) if Christ, sent to save the Israelites, adopted the Gentiles also to this felicity, how much are you indebted to your Lord, Who has joined you to this Church gathered from among the Gentiles? Give Him most ardent thanks, and beg Him to accomplish in you what He has so happily begun.

4. Consider the last words of the Canaanite woman—"Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters." Meditating piously on these words, place yourself as one of the whelps at the heavenly table of our Lord Jesus, Who sits thereat with so many thousand Saints, and casts His various gifts, like heavenly crumbs, into the souls of the Elect. Whence having excited yourself to an ardent desire for these crumbs, imitate the cries of hungry whelps, with their eager desires for food, and with most earnest prayers beg of God those things of which He knows that you, and others, and the Holy Church, are in need.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the sharpness of Christ's words in reproving the dulness of His disciples, who, when admonished to avoid the doctrine of the Pharisees, thought that Christ spoke of something else—"Have you still your heart blinded? Having eyes see you

not?"[10] From these words gather a two-fold profit —(1) Learn not to be offended at sharp words, if you hear them sometimes from those who have authority to say them, for if excessive anger is a vice, so likewise the omission thereof when it is required is blameworthy; examine yourself diligently, lest perhaps to you also these words of Christ may apply—"Having eyes thou seest not, having ears thou hearest not." This you will perceive by reflecting on the benefits and precepts of God, and on the obligations and customs of Religious life, examining how you are using them, and whether you see and do all that should be seen and done. And if, perchance, you find yourself liable to many defects, blush, pray, beg pardon, and amend your life.

2. Consider why the pernicious doctrines of the Pharisees were called by Christ leaven, and see whether, perchance, you too are imbued with any perverse doctrines, full either of a worldly or a political spirit, such as withdraw the heart from Religious perfection and simplicity, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

3. Consider that the truth of doctrines is not to be measured so much by the authority of the teachers, as by their conformity with the doctrines of Christ and of the Apostles. For the Pharisees, although they were Doctors of the Law among the Jews, and had adopted for themselves a more perfect rule of life, yet instilled pestilential doctrines. Therefore resolve with a firm purpose of your mind, to place your faith in no man, whatever may be his dignity, if

[10] St. Mark viii. 17, 18.

he teach or urge anything contrary to those whom God has left to you in His place.

4. Consider why you can and ought with a safe conscience to acquiesce in every doctrine and counsel of those who stand to you in the place of God, when it is a question of anything not manifestly sinful. Having recognized your defects in this particular, whether through stubbornness of judgment, or false opinion, or any other cause, bewail your pride, so directly repugnant to the Religious abnegation which should flourish in you, and amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the words of Christ to the multitude and to His disciples—"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."[11] Wherein He lays down three necessary conditions for reaching the place where Christ is. The first is to deny oneself. Examine what this means. Apply it to yourself, and see if you are already denying yourself. You will perceive better what it signifies by considering the dispositions of one who renounces either heresy or some crime.

2. Consider the second condition necessary for attaining to Christ—"Let him take up his cross daily." This is, let him always carry it. Examine how far this is practicable, and how far it is practised by you, and blush, you luxurious member, under the thorny Head of Christ our Lord.

3. Consider the third condition—"Let him follow Me." You will see from two things what it is to follow Christ—(1) From Christ's position; (2) from

[11] St. Matt. xvi. 24.

His works. For we ought to follow Him as servants follow their lord, as soldiers their captain, as sons their father. For so to follow is nothing else than to accommodate oneself to His mode of life, and to conform oneself thereto exactly. See whether you do this, and elicit suitable affections, whether of thanksgiving, or grief, &c.

4. Consider the motives whereby you may be excited to the fulfilment of these three conditions necessary for following Christ. Which motives may be sought for from the excellence of Christ our Lord, from His will, from your multiplied obligation and profit, as well as from the necessity and usefulness of these three conditions. Having humbly implored pardon, and bewailed your slothfulness, beg from our Lord Jesus the grace to imitate Him most perfectly by your life in Religion, and promise Him amendment.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Qui Potens est.

1. Consider the power of God in producing natural objects which He can and does produce in a moment without any delay, and if He pleases, without any instrument or pre-existing matter, producing them in greater and greater perfection, being able to produce them *ad infinitum*, and to complete them more and more thoroughly, by removing their imperfections and increasing their perfections. This no creature can do, or if it could, it would only do it by the power of God. As therefore you have so powerful a Lord, rejoice, congratulate Him on this

perfection, and excite in yourself the hope of obtaining from Him all things which belong to the perfection of your nature.

2. Consider the power of God in producing supernatural things, especially grace and glory, which He produces with no less ease and abundance than the things of nature; and thus He can, if He pleases, bestow on you all the gifts which He has bestowed on any Saint whatever, yea, even those which He has bestowed on all put together, and many more than these. Think therefore by what means you may incline His Heart to you, that He may be liberal to you, and be willing to grant you all He can.

3. Consider the power of God in destroying things, which He can, without any instrument or delay, turn to nothingness by the mere withdrawal of His concurrence, whereby they are preserved. Here you will conceive a great fear of God, on Whom you so depend, and you will pray Him to preserve and increase His gifts in you, and to destroy your ills, the ills I mean of sin and punishment. See, however, what is necessary on your part, and supply it.

4. Consider the power of God in converting sinners, especially those who have been long in sin, which the holy Fathers say is more difficult than the creation of the world itself, through the resistance of human liberty, to which nothing is equal in the creation of natural things. Experience teaches this in yourself, who by so many means are not yet helped to the purification of your heart from trifling sins, to which nature does not so incline as in seculars to grievous sins. Be ashamed, beg pardon, and implore the help of our most blessed and pure Mother, that through Him Who is Mighty, and Who

has done great things for her, you may obtain most powerful aid to convert you from your sins, and to lead you to all good.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the wicked consultation of the Pharisees "to ensnare Christ in His speech,"[1] and hence take occasion to consider how pernicious in community life is every public sin, but particularly that for the commission of which the counsel and help of others are sought. Take heed that this never happens in Religion by your cooperation, see how it is to be avoided from every divine and human motive, and determine what you should do if tempted from the right path by the bad counsels of others.

2. Consider the praises of Christ uttered by the insincere mouth of the Jews—"We know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man, for Thou dost not regard the person of men." Wherein two things are to be considered and desired by you—(1) That you may be worthy of this three-fold praise, that is, that you may be truthful in your speech, that you always teach others true doctrine, and that you may not be influenced by personal sentiments, that is, that you may do nothing contrary to the will of God or the dictates of conscience for the favour of men, and leave nothing undone for fear of offending men; (2) that you may so excel in these matters for the glory of God, that even your enemies may be forced to acknowledge these virtues in you. See

[1] St. Matt. xxii. 15.

if it be so with you, and determine what you have to do.

3. Consider these words of Christ—"Whose image and inscription is this."[2] Think that they are said to you, and that you are asked whether there shine forth in you the image of a good Christian, the life of a good Christian, the life of a good Religious, the image of the Eternal Father. This you will discover from the qualities of a good Christian, of a good Religious, of a good son of God; and according to what you shall find, elicit thanksgivings or sentiments of grief.

4. Consider the other words of Christ—"Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." See what you owe to men, your superiors, equals, inferiors; what also to God, as your Creator, Lord, Benefactor, Father, Redeemer, and finally as your Food, feeding you with His substance. And from all these things gather pious sentiments, and make various good resolutions.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the reward of labours and troubles in the service of God, even when, through obedience and charity, life itself is shortened by them, or actually lost without any fault—"Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall save it."[3] That is, he shall receive a better life, an eternal life in Heaven, abounding in every kind of happiness. Having penetrated the greatness of this happiness, see how fervently, how diligently, how assiduously,

[2] St. Matt. xxii. 20. [3] St. Mark viii. 35.

with what pains you should labour in every duty assigned you by your Superiors, although deprived of all human solace, gratitude, and applause. For the supreme blessedness of eternal salvation surpasses all these things. Examine therefore what is your behaviour in this respect, and resolve on what you have to do.

2. Consider the quality or mode of your labours in Religion. Are they such as are worthy of Heaven? Again, are they such as may cause some injury to your life? If you find them, perchance, to be not only disproportioned to a heavenly reward, but even to the expense incurred by Religion in training you, be ashamed, mourn, beg pardon; and having recognized your multiplied and grave obligations to put aside idleness and useless occupations and to labour in Religion, amend in good earnest.

3. Consider the order which is necessary to be observed in your labours, namely, that you should not labour more for the help of others than for yourself. For this would be a great blindness and folly, as each one ought to love himself better than others—"For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?"[4] Examine therefore all the occupations of your day, and see whether you attend more to those that belong to others than to yourself and the good of your soul. And if you find anything to correct, strive to correct it, having first blamed yourself for your folly and bewailed it before God.

4. Consider these words of Christ—"What exchange shall a man give for his soul." Having considered on the one hand the excellence of your

[4] St. Matt. xvi. 26.

soul, and on the other the vileness of those things to obtain which, or not to lose them, we injure our souls, hindering their merits and welfare, acknowledge what care you should take of your soul, not only that you may not lose it, but that you may fill it by the gift of God with as many merits and graces as possible.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider that the companions of Christ in His Transfiguration were three disciples, neither more nor less; and that these three were Peter, James, and John, whom Christ was accustomed to call apart from the others to His more intimate intercourse. Having sought into the causes of this, apply them each to yourself, and draw forth pious sentiments.

2. Consider why Christ would have none of the Old Law, except Moses and Elias, present at His Transfiguration, and think over those things which are specially praised in the Scriptures regarding Moses and Elias. Having reflected inwardly, endeavour to improve your life by their application to yourself.

3. Consider the subject of the discourse of Moses and Elias with Christ at the time of His so joyful Transfiguration—"They spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem."[5] Here inquire the reasons why at so joyful a time there was no other discourse than this, and from everything gather some spiritual fruit.

4. Consider Christ transfigured, in a white rai-

[5] St. Luke ix. 31.

ment and with a shining countenance. Congratulate your most sweet Redeemer on this brief glory; rejoice thereat, and mourn that it must be so soon changed into great ignominy, in the disfigurement of His sacred Flesh by so many blows and wounds. In the meantime, pray Him that He may bring you in His own time to see the glory of His now blessed Body in the Heavenly Courts, and may make you participate to the utmost in the fruits of His bitter Passion.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider these words of Peter to Jesus—"Master, it is good for us to be here."[6] Having applied these words either to the heavenly glory which we expect, or to the Religious state in which we live, calling briefly to mind the principal fruits thereof, burn with an ardent desire both of obtaining heavenly glory and of living better in Religion, so as to persevere to the end therein.

2. Consider the other words of Peter—"Let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias."[7] Wherein shone forth the tender goodness of Peter, who, unmindful of himself, was mindful of others, that he might set up tabernacles for them. This is the proof of true charity, to wish always to offer the best of everything to others. See if it be so with you; and if there be anything to correct, try to correct it.

3. Consider the joyful words of God the Father, spoken of Christ from the bright cloud—"This is

[6] St. Luke ix. 33. [7] St. Matt. xvii. 4.

My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased." Having pondered these words singly and attentively, rejoice at this praise of Christ. Congratulate Him, and excite in yourself an ardent desire of so living that in the eyes of your Heavenly Father you may always be as His adopted son, beloved and pleasing to Him. See what is necessary for this, try to acquire it; and in order thereto, pray ardently to Christ Jesus.

4. Consider the last words of the Eternal Father —"Hear Him." Examine how you hear the precepts and counsels of Christ; whether those which He has left written down for you in the Gospel, or those which He writes daily in your heart, and transmits to you by pious readings, the good example of others, by your prayers, by holy discourses, and other admonitions of your Superiors; and either give thanks if you hear the words of Christ, or bewail your disobedience, and purpose amendment.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the state of the boy presented by his afflicted parents to Christ, and who, being possessed by a devil from his infancy, was often dashed about, and cast into the fire and into the water, for his destruction; and having comprehended his miserable and deplorable state, consider that the state of the soul is much worse when stained not only by mortal, but even by one single deliberate venial sin. This you will easily perceive, because to be possessed by the devil, and to suffer even worse evils, is not a sin in itself, but often directly willed by God, and

because the pains of Purgatory are much greater than such an affliction of the devil. Recognize therefore the state of your soul; think what it is after so many sins, and examine what is to be done.

2. Consider the reasons why the disciples of Christ could not deliver this boy from the torments of the devil. Hence you may learn that even the Saints cannot always do all things, and that not only we must not expect everything from the Saints, but that we must supply our own cooperation for removing the obstacles to Divine blessings. See whether there be such in you, and what it behoves you to do.

3. Consider the words of Christ—"O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?"[8] Which words He said in the presence of a great multitude. Learn hence not to be scandalized if you hear similar reproofs; learn to be angry with vices and sins, without regard to human favour, because it is better to please God than men. Take heed, however, that your manner exceed not due bounds.

4. Consider the mercy of Christ, Who finally healed the boy by His mere command—"Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee go out of him, and enter not any more into him."[9] Hence acknowledge that you are in some manner worse than this unclean spirit, who obeyed at the first words of Christ. And you indeed—how often do you hear the admonitions of Christ correcting you, and yet you obey not? Be ashamed; beg pardon, mourn, and amend.

[8] St. Matt. xvii. 16. [9] St. Mark ix. 24.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the audacity of the devil, who dared, in Christ's presence, to cast a boy upon the ground, and at the very time when Christ was about to heal him. Wherein observe the devil's usual mode of proceeding; exciting in men sentiments and principles especially contrary to those persons through whom God our Lord wishes to heal us, and to help us in our spiritual necessities. Reflect on yourself; you will certainly discover this. Wherefore, having perceived the artifices of the devil, amend, and put away his inspirations.

2. Consider the words of Christ to the afflicted father, so anxious about his son—"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."[10] Receive these words in the simplicity of your heart as said to you; and since you are in need of many things, beg them from your Lord, animated by a great faith and hope, inasmuch as all things are possible to him that believeth.

3. Consider the pious sentiments of the afflicted father, who thus answered Christ—"I do believe, Lord; help my unbelief." He uttered these words, crying out with tears. And do you rejoice in your heart that such faith was found in Judea. Congratulate him, because through the gift of God he had so much faith; and with a similar affection make use of the same words in begging of Christ the many things which you need.

4. Consider the manner wherein Christ helped that boy. For He did not heal him completely, and

[10] St. Mark ix. 22.

at once, as He might have done—(1) for Satan went out of him, crying out, and greatly tearing him; (2) he was left as one dead; (3) many were persuaded he was dead. Hence learn not to condemn the works of others, although at the first appearance it seems that they are not thoroughly perfect. See what is your behaviour, and correct what needs correction.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Et Sanctum Nomen Ejus.

1. Consider the first manner wherein the Name of God is holy, namely, it contains an infinite sanctity, one substantial to itself, and as essential as the Divine Being, which is truly and intimately sanctity itself, in a supreme and infinite degree. Admire so great a perfection. Congratulate it, adore it deeply. And if you love the saints tenderly on account of their sanctity, see how much greater should be your love towards your God, on account of His infinitely greater sanctity. See therefore what you should do.

2. Consider how you should imitate this essential holiness of God; in such a manner, namely, as that by God's grace you should be grounded in a holy life, so that such a life might be, as it were, inseparable from you, morally speaking, just as that which is part of your being is inseparable from you. You will see if it is so with you by your temptations, agitations, and trials; observing whether you be very much, or very little, or not at all, moved by these attacks.

3. Consider the second manner wherein the Name of God is holy: it is the ideal and model of all holiness. Examine how this is. For you will imitate God in this, if all your words and deeds be such as are truly examples of virtue, worthy of imitation. See how it is with you; observe what is wanting, and try to acquire it.

4. Consider the third manner wherein the Name of God is holy; it is the cause of all holiness in His rational creatures, both Angels and men. Look at this fountain, which pours itself out in so many thousand saints, through so many streams and rivers. Adore it; beg that it may communicate itself copiously and unceasingly to you also, and imitate it, by exciting and helping others to acquire and to increase holiness. See if you do this, and strive to do it.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the promptness of Christ, Who, when begged by a father whose daughter was already dead, to come and lay His hand upon her, "rising up, followed him."[1] Thank your Lord for this great readiness, and see whether you be as prompt in obeying the things commanded you by Christ, as He was in doing that which was asked Him by one of His creatures. Think on this, blush, and amend.

2. Consider the humility of Christ, Who, when about to raise the dead girl to life, said publicly that she was not dead, but sleeping—"The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth." Then He raised her up, "having

[1] St. Mark ix. 19.

first put them all out;" and lastly, "He charged them strictly that no man should know it."[2] Do you thus hide your works? Do you thus fly human applause? Do you thus make light of your praises? Examine yourself, therefore, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider the petulance of the multitude, who laughed Christ to scorn. Oh, how often do you imitate the multitude in this, when you blame and deride, not only in your heart, but before others, things which are rightly said, or rightly omitted. See whether this is becoming in an humble man, one who ought to put himself below others; whether it is becoming in him who is a member of the one body. Examine this seriously, and amend.

4. Consider the manner in which Christ raised the dead girl to life—(1) "He took her by the hand;"[3] (2) He cried out, saying, "Maid arise;"[4] (3) "He bid them give her to eat."[5] Ponder on each circumstance, apply them to your food of this day in the Holy Eucharist; and gather from each some pious sentiments.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the goodness of Christ, Who, being asked by His disciples why they could not cast out the devil, did not tell them of all that was wanting in them; pointing out their want of prayer, but only in a general way, without naming their defects fully. "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting."[6] Learn hence how carefully, and for what

[2] St. Mark v. 43. [3] St. Matt. ix. 25. [4] St. Luke viii. 54.
[5] St. Luke viii. 55. [6] St. Mark ix. 28.

reason, you should abstain from criticising others by your speech, since Christ your God, Creator, King, Shepherd, Lord, and Father, abstained from so doing.

2. Consider the zeal of Christ, Who would not conceal one special defect; but passing over their want of prayer and fasting, reproached them for their incredulity, declaring that through the unbelief of His disciples, they could not cast out the devil. Here inquire why He pointed out in His disciples this defect so clearly, and no others. And learn this among other reasons, that the cause of nearly all our evils is, that in the ways of God we do not believe the admonitions and counsels, whether of our Superiors, or of those friends who are recommended to us by the virtue of their lives. See, therefore, if it be so with you, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

3. Consider the power of prayer and fasting for casting out devils, and why they have that power. And having bewailed your aversion, and, as it were, tacit contempt for these virtues, see wherein you have to amend.

4. Consider these words of Christ—"Amen I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from hence hither, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you."[7] In which words examine first, why you, with many others, are destitute of such a faith; then see how abundant is the mercy of Christ, Who says that nothing is impossible to us who believe; and from each consideration draw pious sentiments, both for the amendment of your life, and for the exciting your gratitude and love towards God.

[7] St. Matt. xvii. 19.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider these words of Christ, speaking of His coming Passion—"The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men."[8] Consider in these words what a grievous thing was His betrayal for your sake into the hands of wicked men, and how dear to you should be every earthly trial for the sake of Christ, for it cannot be equal to this, His betrayal. Try to penetrate this, and secure hence an efficacious antidote against all your troubles.

2. Consider the evil state of a soul deprived of the light and help of God, as shown forth to the disciples of Christ, for clearly enough He said to them—"The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and after that He is killed He shall rise again the third day, but they understood not the word." Hence take occasion to reproach yourself for neglecting, as though you understood them not, so many clearer and more necessary things, things so often read, heard, thought on, perfectly well understood, and many times promised to God. As for example: that it is better to please God than men; that there is less harm, yea, that there is no harm at all in offending men, so that they offend not God; that more account is to be made of the eternal rewards of Heaven than of the transitory pleasures of earth, for whose sake the prize of eternal reward is often either omitted or altogether lost; with other similar thoughts. Draw therefore some resolutions for the amendment of your life.

[8] St. Mark ix. 30.

3. Consider the foolish fear of the disciples, who, although they understood not the words of Christ, uttered doubtless for their good, "were afraid to ask Him what He meant." Oh, how often art thou also hindered by a foolish fear from begging for what you need, from asking what you are ignorant of, from saying what you should say; and yet, how often have you found that in conquering this idle fear, you have not hurt, but benefited both yourself and others. Resolve therefore always to conquer such fears, having pondered well on the reason for this conquest, and begin this very day to gain this glorious victory.

4. Consider how Christ strove to edify others, and to avoid even a passive scandal. On this account He paid the tribute of a didrachma for Himself and Peter by working a miracle, viz., the finding of a stater in the fish caught by a hook. For He said to Peter—"That we may not scandalize them, go to the sea," &c.[9] Examine whether you avoid in like manner all deeds and words which may give occasion of scandal, either to those who dwell with you, or to externs; and again, whether you are as prompt in paying that which you owe to God and men, as Christ was in paying tribute, which, as God and King of men, He was not bound to pay. Having thought upon your own actions, correct what you perceive may need correction.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider that the commencement of fraternal correction in personal injuries is this—"If thy

[9] St. Matt. xvii. 26.

brother shall offend against thee, go and rebuke him between thee and him alone."[10] They violate this rule, who speak of their injuries to the one who has injured them, not in such a manner as may gain him and benefit him, but so as to cause mutual offence. See what is your behaviour in this respect, and try to correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the progress of fraternal correction in the offences committed against you. When, namely, your own correction, given kindly and benevolently, is of no avail, you should strive to gain him to your Lord, having taken one or two witnesses, that is, tried and prudent men, by whose authority he who has offended you may at least be helped, and before whom no harm is caused by this manifestation of a private injury. This rule is broken by persons who make known their injuries to those who are not concerned in knowing them, or who cannot be of any use, and this in such a manner that they injure still more both the offender and the soul of the offended. Examine your own behaviour, and having considered the malice of this fault, correct it.

3. Consider that the completion of fraternal correction consists in declaring personal injuries to our Superiors, so that finally they may be helped with whom other means have failed—"If he will not hear them, tell the Church," wherein, under the name of the Church, we may understand our Superiors. See if you have recourse in this manner to your Superiors, and having examined the reasons, as well as the multiplied necessity thereof, determine what you have to do for the future.

4. Consider these terrible words of Christ, in up-

[10] St. Matt. xviii. 15.

holding the authority of Superiors—"If He will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican." Think what it is to be considered as a heathen and publican. Since therefore God Himself puts into this class all who do not hear their Superiors, gather hence where such persons must be before your Lord, and resolve on whatever your pious sentiments may suggest, to amend your life, and satisfy for your past faults.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider our great happiness, liable as we are to so many evils, in having an abundant remedy for them all in holy confession—"Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven."[11] Ponder upon this ample power with a tender affection of gratitude towards God; see how you are using it; and giving hearty thanks to God for it, see whether there be anything to correct.

2. Consider another happiness which depends upon ourselves—"I say to you," says our Lord, "if two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in Heaven."[12] Since therefore you need so much, why do you not ask? If you ask, see for what reason you are not heard, when you have so ample a promise of being heard.

3. Consider the desire of Christ to remain with us —"Where there are two or three gathered together

[11] St. Matt. xviii. 18. [12] St. Matt. xviii. 19.

in My Name, there I am in the midst of them."[13] See how much more reason you have to desire Christ than He has to desire you; enumerate these necessities; see if you burn with this desire; and wonder at your blindness and deplore it, in not seeking your Supreme Good, when It offers Itself to you, and you are pressed by so many necessities.

4. Consider what it is to be gathered together in the Name of Christ, and thus to have Christ in the midst of us. And reflecting on yourself, examine these two things—(1) Whether you are gathered together in the Name of Christ when you are with others; (2) whether your behaviour then is such as it would be were Christ in your midst; and if you find anything to correct, as will no doubt be the case, try seriously and quickly to amend.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the true reason why the Jews, in seeking Christ, "sought Him on the festival day,"[14] and not on any other day. Having found out the reason, gather lessons for the instruction of your life.

2. Consider the judgment of the common people regarding Christ, when He was sought by their superiors. "There was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said, He is a good man. And others said, No, but He seduceth the people."[15] Learn hence not to labour for the judgments of men, but for those of God, which never err. For not only are human judgments,

[13] St. Matt. xviii. 20.

[14] St. John vii. 11. [15] St. John vii. 12.

especially those of the foolish and rash, very contrary to truth, but even those of the prudent are fallacious and not always certain; and yet if you will confess the truth, you make more account of men's judgments than of God's regarding you. For thus you are in fear of the bad opinion of others; thus you are sad if you see that people think ill of you; and thus, lest you be taken for a scrupulous man or a tell-tale, you accomodate yourself to the pleasure of others by offending God. See how disgraceful and injurious this is, and strive to amend.

3. Consider the foolish fear of those, of whom it was said that "no man spoke openly to Him for fear ot the Jews." Oh, how often you imitate them in this respect, when ashamed, through fear of men, of a life that pleases Christ. Consider therefore the reasons which should convince you that God is more to be feared than men; even those very reasons which make you fear to offend men, lest you suffer anything from them. Having discovered them, examine why you prefer men to God; and having bewailed your presumption, beg pardon of God, and amend.

4. Consider these words of Christ—"Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law?"[16] Think that these words are said to yourself, take them to mean partly the law of God often broken by you in the world, and partly the laws of your Order, which are now often disregarded; and from each meaning gather pious sentiments of grief, confusion, entreaty, and amendment.

[16] St. John vii. 19.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Et Misericordia Ejus.

1. Consider the first degree of God's mercy, which He bestows on those who ask it not. Call to mind the many who are converted from infidelity and a bad life, to faith and piety, by the addition of whom the Church of God has been spread in all ages. Congratulate them in spirit, give thanks to the Divine Goodness, and see how by your works you should show a tender charity and mercy even towards those who do not ask for them, that so you may resemble your Lord.

2. Consider the second degree of Divine mercy, which He shows to those positively unworthy through their crimes, which are great obstacles to His mercy. Acknowledge yourself to be also one of these; congratulate yourself on this mercy; grieve that there are so many men who do all in their power to impede the entrance of Divine mercy; beg of our Lord to overcome by His mercy the unworthiness of men, and see wherein you should show your mercy to those who offend you, and are unworthy of it.

3. Consider the third degree of Divine mercy, which He shows even towards those who abuse it, who sin in the hope of mercy, and lose through their own fault the benefits derived from His mercy. See if you have been or be of this number, and excite yourself to the same sentiments as in the former points.

4. Consider the fourth degree of Divine mercy, which He communicates to those who, as He fore-

sees, will be lost through their own fault: which mercy is greater than all those before mentioned. Compassionate all such; thank our Lord for so much mercy; pray Him that you may not be of their number; and learn to do good to those who will not profit by your goodness. Learn to help such also, to labour for such as through their own fault will not profit by your labours; and beg the Blessed Virgin to obtain for you similar degrees of mercy towards them.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the perversity of human judgments, whereby even the friends of Christ did not spare Him. "They went out to lay hold on Him. For they said, He has become mad."[1] If, therefore, Christ, Who was perfectly holy and circumspect in all things, escaped not the grave censure of His friends, what wonder that His servants should be unjustly condemned? See whether you do this to others; if so, mourn, and avoid it. And if you suffer anything unjustly, give most hearty thanks, for it is a great sign of Divine election to suffer such things from others without just cause.

2. Consider the still more severe censure of the Scribes, who said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of devils He casteth out devils." Compassionate Christ, Who was so innocent; make contrary acts; adore as the true God Him Who can do this, and more than this, by His innate power. Compare all your injuries with this insult; and

[1] St. Mark iii. 21.

acknowledging them to be far less, be not sad, be not angry with others, complain not, change not your good resolutions, seek not revenge, but be silent and content with the Divine judgment; yea, rather ardently desire such crosses for your Lord, even more, and heavier crosses, and without any consolation.

3. Consider the modesty and patience of Christ in refuting the Scribes; nothing bitter, nothing sharp did He say at the beginning, but strove by gentle reasoning to deliver them from their evil judgments. "How can Satan cast out Satan? and if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand." Learn hence how you should answer, not only those who do not injure you, but those who do; and having blamed your frequent impatience, purpose a serious amendment.

4. Consider these words of Christ said to the same persons—"He that is not with Me, is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth."[2] This you may interpret in various ways, as well as in the following manner: that we thus fall into sins that are contrary to Christ, because we have not our hearts joined by a union of mind and affection to Him, and to things belonging to Him, and thus we do not gather, but scatter our merits, without any gain or fruit of eternity. Pondering on this, beg of Christ, about to unite you to Himself in the Holy Eucharist, so to draw your affections to Himself, and to all that relates to Him, that you may always be with Him, and never, at least deliberately, against Him.

[2] St. Matt. xii. 30.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the words of Christ to the Jews—"Why seek you to kill Me?"[3] and apply them to yourself when living in the world, where you did not only *seek* to crucify Him, but did actually often spiritually crucify Him; and also to yourself now, by your venial sins, preparing the way for mortal sins which kill Christ in the soul, and elicit sentiments of grief, compunction, and humiliation, with purposes of amendment.

2. Consider the impious answer of the Jews—"Thou hast a devil; who seeketh to kill Thee?" To which our Lord answered not even by a sharp little word, nor did He by even a gesture, or change of countenance, or silence, show any emotion of mind. Learn hence how and for what reasons you should conform yourself to your Head when insulted; and bewail both the affronts and reproaches by which, after the manner of the Jews, you wound others, and your frequent impatience of mind.

3. Consider these other words of Christ—"Are you angry with Me because I have healed the whole man on the Sabbath day?"[4] See how often you also are angry with your Superiors, and with your equals, when they seek, by due means, and means employed in any Order of Religion whatsoever—yea, even in any well-ordered community of heathens—to draw you from your vices, whether by declaring them to those in authority, or by correcting them. You will see the wickedness of this by considering

[3] St. John vii. 20. [4] St. John vii. 23.

that the diseases of the soul are worse than those of the body; and yet you are not angry when these are made known to your Superiors, and when even a difficult cure is prescribed. Therefore let not your soul, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, destined to the vision of God in Heaven, the throne of God Himself, be in a worse condition than a bag of worms, your most foul body! Be ashamed, mourn, and amend your folly and blindness.

4. Consider these other words of Christ—"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge just judgment."[5] As though a judgment could not be just which is according to appearance. Here examine your hard judgments on all kinds of persons, resting on no certain grounds; and having perceived therein the danger of many evils, allow them not in future, but diligently guard against them; and beg pardon from God, and from the Guardian Angels of those whom you have condemned, for your past rash judgments.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the malice of the Jews in accusing the woman taken in adultery, not with the desire of correcting her, but of tempting and accusing Christ. See with what spirit you receive the accusations of others; with how many or how few words, and on what occasion. Having considered all this, if there be anything that needs amendment, be sorry and amend; or if there be no need of amendment, thank God.

[5] St. John vii. 24.

2. Consider the mercy of Christ, Who would not immediately condemn the woman, although He knew her to be certainly worthy of condemnation; although these grave and public personages pressed Him; although He Himself was the Judge of the living and the dead, to Whom this office belonged of right. Why therefore do you so often condemn with your mind and lips the deeds of others, not only your equals, but even your Superiors, for deeds often not evil, and often good? Why do you usurp the office of God? Consider how disgraceful this is, how mischievous to a Community; and having bewailed your many transgressions, in this respect, put on the charity of Christ, and excuse and defend when you can.

3. Consider the holy reasons for which Christ before answering the accusers, "bowing Himself down wrote with His finger on the ground."[6] Examine reverently, and not curiously, what He then wrote; and gather something for the edification of your life.

4. Consider the prudent mercy of Christ, Who, wishing to correct these malignant accusers, abstained from harsh words, but quietly repressed the importunate accusation, and defended the sinful woman, then doubtless penitent—"He that is without sin among you, let him cast a stone at her." Here, from the bottom of your heart, thank your Lord, Who, in the person of the adulterous woman, showed the tenderness of His paternal compassion towards sinners doing penance; and learn at the same time, that then you will be free to condemn even public sinners, when you are without sin

[6] St. John viii. 8.

yourself, and when you have no beam in your eye. As it is not so with you at present, try to interpret everything well; if you cannot, be at least compassionate, and condemn not, if a public duty compel you not thereto.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the first words of our Lord Jesus to this sinful woman—"Woman, where are they that accuse thee? Hath no man condemned thee? Who said, No man, Lord." In which words consider the happy state of your soul through the mercy of your Lord. For you also, on account of past sins, have often many accusers before the just tribunal of God, namely, the devils; the accomplices of your sins; those whom you have led into evil; and lastly, your own conscience. But your sins being blotted out by the Sacraments, there is no one to condemn you. Thank then the Lord your Deliverer; detest your past sins; beg for grace not to fall into them, but rather to make amends for past sin by a holy life.

2. Consider the last words of our Lord Jesus to the sinful woman—"Neither will I condemn thee. Go, and now sin no more." Think that these words are now said to you by God from Heaven; for if you would not be condemned after your sins have been blotted out by the Sacraments, sin no more. See how it is with you, and how you are avoiding those things which dispose you to sin; and try to amend.

3. Consider these words of Christ—"I am the Light of the world. He that followeth Me walketh not in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[7]

[7] St. John viii. 12.

In these words consider what it is to follow Christ as the Light of the world; what it is not to walk in darkness, namely, to shun the eyes of men, to hide what should not be hidden, and similar things, which the children of darkness love. From each consideration gather something for the amendment of your life.

4. Consider some other words of Christ addressed to the perfidious Jews, who would not obey His admonitions—"I go and you shall seek Me, and you shall die in your sins. Whither I go you cannot come."[8] Pondering on this excite in yourself a fear of the hidden judgments of God, lest you also, through your tardy conversion, through your frequent neglect of the counsels and interior aspirations of Christ, be repelled by Him, and die in your sins. That it may not be so, detest and avoid not only mortal sins, but also every occasion that leads thereto.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider these words of Christ to the Jews—"You are from beneath, I am from above."[9] Examine whether you be from above or from beneath. To discover this, consider whether your interior desires, fears, joys, sadness, hatred, words and deeds, be such as will please Christ, or men of the world. According as you shall find them, excite in yourself suitable sentiments, either of thanks and praise to God, or of shame, grief, and amendment.

2. Consider these other words of Christ addressed

[8] St. John viii. 21. [9] St. John viii. 23.

to the same—"Many things I have to speak and to judge of you."[10] Think of them as said to yourself; examine your conscience, to see what are those things in you which your Lord may now justly judge, that is, condemn; search into them, and number them with interior sentiments of shame and grief. Lest, therefore, they come before the final judgment of God, strive to do away with them now by tears, confession, satisfaction, and amendment.

3. Consider these other words of Christ—"The things I have heard of Him"—that is, of the Father—"these same I speak in the world."[11] And you, what do you speak before those who dwell with you, and before externs? And to what end, in what manner, with what fruit, what effect, what example? If there be anything to amend, amend it.

4. Consider again these words of Christ—"He that sent Me is with Me, and He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that please Him."[12] From which words learn how always to have God present with you, by a special affection of benevolence, that is, by doing always the things which please Him. Think over the reasons which should urge you to this, and rouse yourself effectually to such a mode of life as may enable you to say truly, that you always do the things which please Him. In order to attain this, beg the grace of God.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider these words of Christ to the converted Jews—"If you continue in My Word, you shall be

[10] St. John viii. 26. [11] St. John viii. 26. [12] St. John viii. 29.

My disciples in deed; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Think that they are said to you, apply them to yourself, having pondered on the meaning of each word so as to excite in yourself an effectual desire of keeping the words of God, and by this means to be delivered from all things from which God's fervent servants are free.

2. Consider the effect of sin expressed in these words of Christ—"Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin. Now the servant abideth not in the house for ever." [13] See whether you commit sin, and are the servant of sin. If it be not so, thank your Lord heartily; pray that you be not cut off from His service; and mourn your past sins, that so by tears you may blot out the punishment due to them. And if as yet you be liable to sins belonging to the world, be ashamed, as one unworthy to be among the sons of God, filling His sanctuary with an evil odour, and give up at length the service of the devil for that of Christ, lest you be excluded from the heavenly house which belongs to His children.

3. Consider also these words of Christ—"If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham," [14] and apply them to yourself, exciting yourself to do the work of your fathers, whether those common to all Christians and Religious, as the work of Prophets and Apostles, or those peculiar to yourself, the works of the Founders of your Order. Examine therefore whether all your interior works be such as were the especial works of your fathers; and having observed your principal defects, try to correct them.

4. Consider the words of Christ—"If God were

[13] St. John viii. 34, 35. [14] St. John viii. 39.

your Father, you would indeed love Me."[15] By which words He shows that they are not sons of His Heavenly Father who love not Christ. Examine therefore whether you love Christ. This you will know, if there be found in you those signs of love which are to be found in your love for any dear companion.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Et Misericordia Ejus a Progenie in Progenies Timentibus Eum.

1. Consider the first mercy which our Lord shows to those who fear Him—He forgives their sins more easily and quickly, even if, which God forbid, they should fall sometimes into grievous sins, as did David and Peter; but especially He forgives their venial sins, for the blotting out whereof He excites in those who fear Him most ardent acts of penitence, love, piety, indifference, love of enemies, and other means of satisfaction whereby the soul is purged from sins. Examine whether you feel such in yourself, and whether you cooperate with God; and see what is necessary that you may experience this mercy in yourself.

2. Consider that the second mercy of God towards those who fear Him, consists in their rapid and sensible progress in virtue, such a progress as they can even recognize in themselves at intervals of time, and this with a profound humility. Examine whether you perceive this mercy in yourself, and at the same time inquire the reasons, if you see no

[15] St. John viii. 42.

rapid and notable progress in yourself. Humble yourself, beg from God this mercy, and remove all obstacles thereto.

3. Consider that the third mercy of God towards those who fear Him, consists in the ready hearing of their prayers. "He will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer, and save them."[16] See whether you experience this, and whether your prayers be such as to deserve it, and try to offer such as are worthy to be heard.

4. Consider the fourth mercy of God towards those who fear Him, whereby they not only make progress themselves, but also help others to perfection, and spread the glory of God more widely among the rest. See if this may apply to you, and if not, what is the impediment; and beg the Blessed Virgin to make you participate in this four-fold mercy of God, but above all to obtain for you an earnest disposition for it, that is, a filial fear of God.

TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider how words that are not good are given by Christ as a sign of a life that is not good—"How can you speak good things, whereas you are evil?"[1] Reflect on this, and you will perceive that it is not a small evil, nor the sign of a small evil, to speak words that are bad or not good. Hence you shall see whether you should seek after persons of such conversation, and how you should help them in similar discourses.

[16] Psalm cxliv. 19. [1] St. Matt. xii. 34.

2. Consider the reason given by Christ for His words—"Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Ponder on this, and examine in what things your own heart abounds; as you have consecrated it to God, see whether it be full of God, or of other things; and observe and determine what you have to do.

3. Consider yet another confirmation of the same saying—"A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of an evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." See what is the nature of your treasure. If it be good, rejoice, and thank God; if evil, take heed to yourself.

4. Consider that Christ blames idle conversations by name, and with great force of words—"I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned."[2] If therefore even one idle word shall be matter for a Divine and public judgment, before the whole world, what of many words? what of many conversations? what of such as are ordinarily idle? and such you will dare utter with that tongue, with that mouth, which so often touches and receives the Body of the Son of God, with His all-holy Mouth and Tongue, which never by a word offended His Heavenly Father! Blush, mourn over the audacity of your mouth, which you bring so often polluted, to the Divine Banquet, and amend.

[2] St. Matt. xii. 36, 37.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the innocence of Christ, Who, as one most blameless, feared not to say to the lying Jews, full of the spirit of calumny and remarking maliciously all His words and deeds—"Which of you shall convince Me of sin?"[3] That is, of one single sin. This enjoins on you to lead such a life that even your enemies may remark nothing in you worthy of blame. See if it be so with you, and having observed the principal defects which your conscience as a judge may condemn in you, strive to amend them.

2. Consider the expostulation of Christ—"If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me?"[4] Wherein consider what evil the Jews did in not believing Christ. But you are much worse who have known Christ better, who have the certain knowledge of His doctrines, and yet by your deeds show that you believe Him not, yea indeed, have no care for what He has recommended. See by examining your life, whether this be true of you; beg pardon, and amend.

3. Consider the happiness of those who willingly listen to good words—"He that is of God heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God."[5] Ponder on each of these words, impress them well on your mind, examine into some of the reasons thereof, and reflecting on yourself, observe whether or no you hear and speak such words willingly, resolving on what you have to do.

[3] St. John viii. 46. [4] St. John viii. 46.
[5] St. John viii. 47.

4. Consider the blasphemy uttered by the Jews against Christ—"Do we not say well Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil."[6] A blasphemy nevertheless borne meekly by Christ. Here gather together all the injuries and insults which you have received, and see how much more trifling they are than this insult towards Christ. Why therefore do you not bear with an even mind to be stung by another with some small word? God incarnate suffered more than this, and you who have so often merited the pains of hell, will you not hear a harsh word? Be ashamed, be sorry, and with a firm resolution of your mind promise your Lord to imitate Him.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the occupation of Christ in this life, as expressed in these words—"I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day;"[7] for He was always engaged in the works of God. And you, who would pass for His member and servant, examine whether your works be such as deserve to be called works of God; and as it is in your power by the help of God so to live as always to do His work, inquire why it is that you will not so live, when it would be for your great profit, great honour, and what is far better, for the great honour of God.

2. Consider your state after death, as declared in these words of Christ—"The night cometh when no man can work,"[8] for then you will not be able by

[6] St. John viii. 48. [7] St. John ix. 4.
[8] St. John ix. 4.

your works to purge your mind from sins, nor to merit anything before God; and yet if you were now in that state you would desire both. Enter then upon such a life, that as long as you live you may accomplish that for the good of your soul which after death you would have perfect.

3. Consider your obligation of helping the world, an obligation whereby the words which Christ said of Himself ought to apply to you—"As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world."[9] Examine therefore what light you give by word and work, at home and abroad, in the church, in the schools, everywhere. And if perchance you resemble darkness rather than light, be sorry, beg pardon, and amend.

4. Consider the means whereby Christ is now the Light of the world, and was such while He lived; whether according to His Divinity or His Humanity; on each point reflect upon yourself and your actions, and elicit pious sentiments of devotion and amendment.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider the form used by Christ in restoring sight to the man born blind—"He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the pool of Siloe."[10] By this Christ showed the necessity of human cooperation for receiving His benefits, for He would not without this means give sight to the blind man, though indeed He could have done so. Hence you may observe that it is

[9] St. John ix. 5. [10] St. John ix. 6, 7.

not enough to call upon God to help you, without doing all you can yourself. See how it is with you, and rouse up your lukewarmness.

2. Consider the fruits of obedience in the man born blind, "who, when he had washed in the pool of Siloe, came seeing." For He had human reasons for acting against it, and of persuading himself that he would not be cured, since so many others who had washed therein, and who were not touched with the spittle, had not been cured. Thus God prospers those who obey simply and without worldly arguments, and who trust in the Divine Providence which He exercises through His vicars.

3. Consider the most evil disposition of the Jews towards Christ, when they would not believe either the blind man himself or his parents, regarding his cure by Christ. Hence perceive the detestable power of a perverted disposition, which obscures the intellect and prevents us from discerning even things that are most clear. Examine whether there be in you such a disposition as will make you blame or turn away from things even good and necessary, as though they were evil, and deny or disbelieve those which are true. Having considered the multiplied danger of this disposition, strive earnestly to amend.

4. Consider the holy disposition of the blind man cured by Christ. For he confessed without fear that he was cured by Christ, and he defended His innocence, and this before Christ's enemies, whom he saw to be full of bitterness. "We know," he said, "that God doth not hear sinners. Unless this Man were of God, He could not do anything.' Congratulate Christ on this holy champion; rejoice inwardly at this defence of Christ; learn not to be

ashamed of defending Christ and all good persons and things when you hear them maliciously criticised, and take heed that you commit not the same fault yourself.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the advantage of a good life, as expressed by the blind man who was cured—"If a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth." Think how true this is, having called to mind the examples of the Saints. Then examine whether you are a server of God, and of what kind, whether you are doing the will of your Lord, and how perfectly, so as to know how far you may hope for the hearing of your prayers, and what you have to correct in order to be reckoned as a true server of God.

2. Consider the true happiness of the blind man cured, in being cast out by the Jews for his defence of Christ. Wherein consider how happy is that soul which suffers trials in this life for God's sake, and having pondered on the multiplied advantage of this, excite in yourself an ardent desire of the Cross. You will see what you have to hope for regarding your patience in great things, by the way you bear the ordinary trials of a Religious life.

3. Consider the liberality of Christ in recompensing the blind man for being cast out. When he heard that they had cast him out, He made known to him the great mystery of His Divinity, and let him on to adore Him. Burn here with a love of Christ, Who will have nothing that is done or suffered for His sake

to pass unrewarded, and at the same time excite in yourself an ardent desire of doing as much as possible for God's sake, so as to be partaker of His gifts.

4. Consider the punishment of the incredulous and disobedient, of whom Christ said—"For judgment I am come into this world, that they who see not may see, and they who see may become blind." Hence it happens that not unfrequently tepid Religious fail, or are cast out, and bad persons in the world are converted, and become excellent. Inquire whether there be in you reasons to fear the former, and apply remedies in time, lest being repelled by Christ you become blind.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the hypocrisy of many persons, to whom this saying of Christ to the Pharisee may aptly apply—"You make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but your inside is full of rapine and of iniquity." [11] Here examine whether the interior state of your soul be as religious and pious as appears outwardly, to those especially who do not know you, or whose esteem you desire. If the two do not agree, think how disgraceful it is to lie, as it were by your deeds, and to make more account of human judgments, whose approbation you seek, than of Divine judgments. Detest therefore your duplicity.

2. Consider the advantage derived from Religious life rightly undertaken, namely, perfect cleansing

[11] St. Luke xi. 39.

from sin. For if Christ gave this reward to almsgiving—"Give alms, and behold all things are clean unto you,"[12] much more does it apply to the Religious state, wherein he who adopts it gives and surrenders to God, not a part, but the whole of his substance, together with himself. Give thanks therefore to our Lord for so great a benefit, and take heed not to defile by your actions this most pure state of life.

3. Consider the even external humility which Christ demands of His own, the want of which He blamed in the Pharisees, who loved the "uppermost seats in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place."[13] Examine whether you are addicted to any such outward display as is contrary to humility, and if there be anything to amend, amend it.

4. Consider how disgraceful it is to have a soul stained with sin and bearing outwardly the appearance of goodness. For our Lord compares such to sepulchres full of dead bodies that appear not, and that the men who walk over them are not aware of. Ponder on the unhappy state of such a a soul, which cares not to put away its interior uncleanliness; try not to be such, and if you have been, bewail your past miseries and take heed for the future.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Fecit Potentiam in Brachio Suo.

1. Consider the power of the Divine Arm, that is, its power in the creation of so many and such excel-

[12] St. Luke xi. 41. [13] St. Luke xi. 43.

lent things out of nothing; and in this display of the infinite power of God, recognize His charity towards you, Who created all these things in a secondary manner for your use, and many for your recreation. At the same time consider how you have used, and are using them; and having bewailed your many sins in the abuse of creatures, see what you have to do in future.

2. Consider the power of the Divine Arm, which He showed in the Old Law, performing so many miracles in favour of His own people, that He might bring them out of Egypt and place them in a suitable abode. Thank Him for so great a charity; and fear lest He cast you away also for your sins, as He cast away the Jews formerly so dear to Him.

3. Consider the power of the Divine Arm shown in the Blessed Virgin, making her a Mother without human operation, and without detriment to her virginity, and preserving her from all original and actual sin. Adore this goodness of our Lord; thank Him for these benefits conferred on your Mother, pray that this same powerful Arm of God may make you in some way like to her, that your sins may be as rare and as light as possible, and that you may not long retain the penalty of sin and the obligation of punishment, but, free from both, may depart hence straight to Heaven.

4. Consider the power of the Divine Arm in the conversion of so many obstinate sinners, in the sanctification of so many imperfect souls, in the communication of innumerable gifts, and in the power of the Sacraments, whose matter and form are worthless in their natural essence. Admire and extol the power of God; and pray that in a secondary manner

He may show it in you most abundantly, communicating to you as many, and as great gifts of grace and glory as possible, that you may resemble as far as you can your Mother full of both, and may be most dear to Christ your Brother.

TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider how great an evil it is not to listen to Christ when He teaches. "The men of Ninive shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas. And behold a greater than Jonas here."[1] Apply these words to yourself, who so often hearing the inspirations of Christ, avoid not what should be avoided, do not that which should be done, although they are easier things than those which were delivered to the incredulous Jews by the preaching of Christ. Purpose therefore amendment, having observed those things which most frequent inspirations enjoin on you to perform.

2. Consider how eagerly you should seek the wisdom which Christ supplies to His own, in diligent prayer, spiritual reading, and conversation with Spiritual Fathers and Superiors, taking for your example the Queen of the East, "because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold," says Christ, "a greater than Solomon here."[2] Take this as said for your example.

3. Consider the reasons why you should have a greater desire to adore, receive, and visit Christ in the most Holy Eucharist, than the Queen of the East

[1] St. Matt. xii. 42. [2] St. Matt. vii. 42.

had to visit Solomon, a visit attended with great expense and toil. Strive always to have and nourish such a desire; and if you be wanting therein, be sorry and ashamed.

4. Consider the obstacles which prevent you from feeling so great a desire for Christ in the Eucharist as you feel for seeing or hearing anything that is curious, or for idle moments, or for recreation, &c. Excite in yourself by this consideration such sentiments as may make you bewail your presumption and render Christ favourable to you, of Whom now you make so little account; and correct yourself.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the truth of this saying of Christ—"There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, nor hidden that shall not be known."[3] This is true both in good and evil. For daily experience shows that wickedness, however it may be hidden by evil men, with all manner of deceit, will yet be discovered in its time, and likewise that the injuries suffered by the good will show themselves at last to be such, no matter what enemies may do. Resolve hence never to hide anything evil, and to hope in the Divine help whenever your innocence is aggrieved.

2. Consider how cautious you should be in not revealing those things which are inexpedient for every one to know. For in such cases it generally happens as Christ foretold—"Whatsoever things you have spoken in darkness shall be published in the light."[4] But rather reveal your secrets to those

[3] St. Luke xii. 2. [4] St. Luke xii. 3.

whose duty it is to know them. Reflect on the reason and advantage both temporal and spiritual of doing this, and rouse yourself to great sincerity with such persons.

3. Consider the happiness of the servants of Christ, who need fear nothing from their enemies—"Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do."[5] You will see this by the examples of the servants of God, and by God's favour towards His own. Strive therefore so to please God, that you may be worthy of His protection.

4. Consider the reasons you have for fearing God—"Fear ye Him, Who after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell."[6] See therefore whether in your conscience and life, there may be or have been causes for justly fearing hell; if there have been, whether they have been removed; and take heed to yourself in time.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the wonderful mercy of God towards His own as expressed in these words—"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows."[7] And as He is not equally favourable to all Christians, but more so to those who are the most highly endowed with virtue, as is just; see whether you are one of

[5] St. Luke xii. 4. [6] St. Luke vii. 5.
[7] St. Luke xii. 6, 7.

those who are after God's own Heart; and if there be any obstacle on your side, try to remove it.

2. Consider the fruit of virtue in not being ashamed of Christ—"Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God."[8] Examine therefore whether you confess Christ before men. You confess Him not, if you are ashamed of saying or doing those things which please Him, and if you are not ashamed of those things which are offensive to Him. Gather hence what you have to expect from Christ.

3. Consider how you should be always well prepared to die, lest, dreaming of a long life and deferring your amendment, you happen to hear this —"Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?"[9] Examine therefore whether you have all things necessary for dying well; and if there be anything wanting, try to obtain it.

4. Consider the folly of that man of whom these words of our Lord are said, that he "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God."[10] See therefore how you lay up treasure, and whether you may be called rich towards God. Thank God if, in enumerating all the occupations of your day, you find them turned to the honour of God, and not merely to your own advantage; if you find yourself more willingly occupied in things immediately relating to God than in all things else; but if you find the contrary, be ashamed, beg pardon and amend.

[8] St. Luke xii. 8.

[9] St. Luke xii. 20. [10] St. Luke xii. 21.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider how little anxiety God would have us feel regarding temporal things. "Be not solicitous for your life what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on."[11] See whether you observe this, or whether rather you are not more careful about the feeding and clothing of your body, than solicitous about your soul. And yet, as Christ says, "life is more than the meat." Consider how shameful this is, especially in a Religious, having weighed well the many reasons for this conviction; and correct what needs correction.

2. Consider the wonderful goodness of God in feeding the little birds, created for your pleasure and for your use. "Consider the ravens, for they sow not, neither do they reap, neither have they storehouse or barn, and God feedeth them."[12] Pondering on this, with filial and tender affection thank God, Who for your sake does good even to such creatures, lest they perish of hunger; and conceive hence a great confidence in the Divine help, which will never fail you unless you are yourself a hindrance to our Lord.

3. Consider how greatly you should have humility at heart—"Be not lifted up on high."[13] See if it be so with you, which you will discover from your words with respect to your own affairs, from your reflections regarding future duties, from your sadness, desires, pursuit of exalted offices, or shunning of any occupations that are mean. On the other

[11] St. Luke xii. 22. [12] St. Luke xii. 24.
[13] St. Luke xii. 26.

hand, consider the reasons why you should not be lifted up on high. Acknowledge your pride, be sorry, and amend.

4. Consider the reasons why we should give the first place of all to heavenly things over those of the earth—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice."[14] Whence, with great confusion and detestation, bewail the folly of your blindness, nay, of your presumption, who more often, for a longer time, more willingly, more constantly, and more effectually seek after the things, discourses, and occupations of earth, than those which tend directly to God and the Kingdom of Heaven. With what face then dare you appear before God, feeling in yourself so little, if any thirst after heavenly things? And yet you have entered Religion in order to leave the world, to seek Heaven, and to be absorbed in our Lord and Divine things.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider why Christ our Lord first called His disciples a little flock, saying, "Fear not, little flock."[15] Apply this to your religion; strive to be little in the sight of God and worthy to be reckoned a little flock. See whether you are such, and why you are not, and try to remove the impediment.

2. Consider the causes which may give you a certain hope of salvation in the state of Religion—"It hath pleased your Father to give you a kingdom." On the other hand, inquire diligently if there be perhaps anything in you which by your

[14] St. Luke xii. 31. [15] St. Luke xii. 32.

fault may take away, or make doubtful, this hope; and having given thanks for your vocation to the Religious state, so conducive to salvation, try to remove the obstacles to such salvation, if there be any in you.

3. Consider why you should earnestly procure for yourself "a Treasure in Heaven which faileth not, where no thief approacheth, or moth corrupteth;"[16] and see how eagerly, how diligently, how assidously, how constantly, you are seeking for this. If you are doing the contrary, be ashamed and sorry, and rouse up your sloth.

4. Consider where you have laid up your treasure, which you will perceive from these words of Christ —"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."[17] Gather hence where you should have your treasure deposited, with the affections of your heart.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider the duty of good servants, whom Christ commends. "Let your loins be girt and lamps burning in your hands."[18] Ponder on the meaning of these words, apply them to yourself; and if there be anything wanting, try to obtain it.

2. Consider the vigilance with which we should await our Lord, that He may find us ready "when He cometh and knocketh,"[19] which He does at the hour of death. On which account you should have a good conscience, for they who have it fear not, but expect and desire the arrival of their Lord.

[16] St. Luke xii. 33. [17] St. Luke xii. 34.
[18] St. Luke xii. 35. [19] St. Luke xii. 36.

Therefore frequently and practically think on this desired event; and if any needful dispositions be wanting, strive to acquire them without delay.

3. Consider the multiplied happiness, both present and future, of the watchful servants of our Lord. "Blessed are the servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." Earnestly endeavour to be of their number; if you be not, deplore your condition, and strive to remove all obstacles.

4. Consider the great honour heaped upon the Saints in Heaven, which is expressed after a human fashion by Christ—"Amen I say to you, that He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them." Compare herewith the comforts of this life, for the sake of which you either offend God, or fail to accumulate as many degrees of heavenly glory as you might; and having recognized your stupidity, amend it, and beg pardon of God for making more account of the comforts of this world than of the honours which God offers to His own servants in Heaven.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Dispersit Superbos Mente Cordis sui.

1. Consider the evil which follows pride, for God scatters those who offend Him in the proud counsels of their hearts, which is the meaning of being proud in the conceit of the heart. This was shown in the sin of Lucifer, and in Adam, whose disobedience took its rise from pride. As therefore you know yourself not to be in your present state as pleasing to God as were Lucifer and Adam before their sin,

nor adorned with so many gifts of our Lord, see how much you should fear, lest through pride you be cut off from His grace.

2. Consider why the Blessed Virgin said not that the proud were destroyed, nor subdued, nor humbled, but *scattered*. And having pondered on the conditions of such objects as are wont to be scattered, apply them to the description of the proud, and gather some lessons for the detestation of pride.

3. Consider that the peculiar act of pride is the desire of a false excellence or elevation, that is, of an undue pre-eminence over others, which may occur in many things. Search into your cravings, and examine your thoughts and desires regarding public occupations particularly in schools, pulpits, &c.; and if you discover anything inordinate, cut it off, by the example of our Lord, "Who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." [20]

4. Consider another act of pride, when not content with the desire of our own excellence, we despise others or wish them to be despised, and our own concerns to be unduly put before theirs. Examine into this also; and having pondered once more on these words, "He has scattered the proud," &c., learn of Christ to be meek and humble of heart.

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the pious words of that woman addressed to Christ—"Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck," [1] and

[20] Philipp. ii. 6, 7. [1] St. Luke ix. 27.

having thought upon that dwelling-place, and that food of Christ Incarnate, see what a heart you should have to receive worthily in the Eucharist, and as it were to conceive within you, that same Lord.

2. Consider the answer of Christ—"Yea, rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it," whereby, as St. Augustine remarks, He shows that it is better to keep and to obey the word of our Lord than to be His Mother. Examine therefore how you have kept it when in the world, and how you are keeping it now, and excite yourself to various holy sentiments of grief, thanksgiving, and the like.

3. Consider what a great power the Holy Eucharist worthily received, has to make you keep the word of God exactly. Inasmuch, however, as you fail therein, blame yourself, be sorry, and amend.

4. Consider how great is the happiness of receiving Christ in the Eucharist so frequently, and seek the reasons why, in certain things, this is really a greater gift than the conception of Christ divinely bestowed on His most holy Mother. Burn therefore with Divine love; give most fervent thanks; and begin such a life as may show you to be truly and profitably fed and nourished, with a food which is truly God, and the source of all virtue, perfection, and sanctity.

MONDAY.

1. Consider the reasons for which you should fear the judgment of God, more than householders fear the coming of the thief. "This know ye, that if the

householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open."[2] Examine whether you fear the coming of the Lord your Judge, so many times offended by your sins, as the coming of an enemy is wont to be feared; and having acknowledged your blindness in not perceiving greater perils and imminent evils, try to correct it.

2. Consider what is necessary for awaiting the coming of God the Judge with a secure mind and without any danger. "Be you then also ready, for at what hour you think not the Son of Man will come." This also you will perceive by the manner with which you would prepare for the arrival of an earthly judge about to judge you, if you were conscious of a crime committed which was worthy of death. What therefore you would do to escape such a punishment, that do in a proportionate manner to escape eternal punishments; and you will not fear the judgment of God.

3. Consider the unhappy condition of the negligent servant of your Lord, as expressed in these words of Christ—"That servant who knew the will of his Lord and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes."[3] See whether you have cause to fear this; resolve on what you should do in order not to fear it, and amend by sorrow and flight your past offences.

4. Consider how liberal you should be towards your Lord, Who has enriched you with so many gifts of nature and grace. "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required."[4] Think how

[2] St. Luke xii. 39.

[3] St. Luke xii. 47.

[4] St. Luke xii. 48.

little you give to your Lord, having enumerated your ordinary actions, whereof there is seldom even one perfect and unstained with many defects; together with your extraordinary works of supererogation, whereof, if there be any, they are few and imperfect. Consider what should be done; and try to amend.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider the desire of our Lord, Who requires from you fervour in the spiritual life. "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?"[5] See whether you burn thus, or why you burn not, and try to remove the obstacles.

2. Consider what an ardent desire Christ had to die for you. "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straightened until it be accomplished."[6] Thank your Lord, so solicitous for your good. On the other hand, consider how afraid you are of bearing even the slightest cross for His sake; and a cross nevertheless due to you for many reasons. Be ashamed, and kindle in yourself an ardent desire of suffering as much as possible for your Lord.

3. Consider why for God's sake even friends are to be forsaken, and intimate relations to be offended. "Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you no, but separation. For there shall be from henceforth five in one house divided three against two and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son and the son against his

[5] St. Luke xii. 49. [6] St. Luke xii. 50.

father,"[7] &c. And you, how often you join yourself against Christ and His will, for, and with, friends inordinately loved, and dare not for His sake to offend your friend, although his favour is not so much to be desired as the favour of your Lord; nor an offence against him so much to be feared as one against God. Acknowledge how great and presumptuous a blindness this is, and amend in earnest.

4. Consider the necessity of penance. "Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish."[8] Examine whether you be doing worthy penance for your many sins. As, however, a part of penance is penitential satisfaction, see how you are performing it, and how it is proportioned, both to the sins committed, and to the pains prepared for you in Purgatory. And if it need to be increased, increase it with the approbation of those in authority.

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider in the woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, "who was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all,"[9] a state of inveterate spiritual infirmities; especially of that infirmity by which many are afflicted, whose thoughts, words, and occupations are almost always turned upon earthly, and not heavenly things. From the troubles and sufferings of corporal ailments, recognize the still greater sufferings of spiritual ailments, which, if they be not felt, show a yet more grievous condition of soul. Take heed, therefore, having thought

[7] St. Luke xii. 51—53. [8] St. Luke xiii. 5.
[9] St. Luke xiii. 11.

well over the reasons for it, that you seek not less earnestly to be healed by Christ of your spiritual infirmities than of those of your body.

2. Consider the goodness of our Lord Jesus, Who having seen the woman, voluntarily called her to Him, and healed her. Thank Him for this charity, think within yourself why your Lord does not heal you as easily of your greater spiritual diseases; and try to remove the impediments you may discover.

3. Consider how Christ healed the woman—"He laid His hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight." On the other hand, see whether Christ does not apply Himself yet more to you; and yet you are not healed. For is it not a greater thing to be fed with the Body and Blood of Christ, than to be touched by Him? Have not His interior words, the helps of His grace, His Sacraments, which you so often receive, a greater power? And yet you do not recover.

4. Consider what that woman did after she was healed—"She glorified God," and did so doubtless with a great and truly ardent affection. See if you do the same; you, whom God so many times delivers from the infirmities of your sins, and pardons them through the Sacrament of Penance and other means; and if there be anything wanting of due fervour, take pains to acquire it.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the fewness of the saved, which you will learn from these words twice uttered by Christ —"Many are called, but few chosen;"[10] and from

[10] St. Matt. xx. 16; xxii. 14.

His answer to those who asked Him, "Lord are they few that are saved?"[11] Whereto He merely replied, "Strive to enter by the narrow gate." In another place He said, "Few there are that find it."[12] Examine seriously whether there be in you such signs as may make it at least probable that you are among these few, and that you may discover by such marks as may commonly apply to those who will be saved.

2. Consider what is the narrow gate, and what it is to strive for the narrow gate. See how it is with you; and if anything be wanting, try to acquire it.

3. Consider the unhappiness and folly of those of whom Christ said, "Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able."[13] Examine to whom these words may apply, and why, and take heed not to be of the number.

4. Consider the immense grief which will afflict the reprobate when they shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and they themselves cast out, To discern this, make various similitudes of persons excluded by force from a marriage feast, from a most delightful garden, from a magnificent palace, from their father's house, and this by night in a storm of rain, in cold, snow, hunger. Thinking over this with tenderness and compunction, be very sorry; fear lest the like happen to you; and take earnest heed that you fall not into their misfortune.

[11] St. Luke xiii. 23.

[12] St. Matt. vii. 14.

[13] St. Luke xiii. 24.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider Christ on the Feast of the Dedication in the winter time, as He "walked in the Temple in Solomon's Porch,"[14] and look at all the movements of His Body, His gestures, carriage, posture; and having thought upon yourself, detest and correct whatever in you differs from Him.

2. Consider which is the greater, the incredulity of the Jews, who did not believe Christ to be the true God, and therefore gave no heed to His precepts and admonitions, or the incredulity of such as believe Christ to be truly God, and nevertheless hear not His admonitions, especially in things that are easy, and which can be done without much labour and exertion; and having thought upon yourself, determine what should be your judgment on yourself, and what you should amend.

3. Consider the insult offered to Christ when the perfidious Jews "took up stones to stone Him."[15] Here compassionate Christ, your Supreme King and Monarch, treated so unworthily by the vilest of men; and by this His example rouse yourself to desire and endure all insults and injuries whatsoever, for however great they may be, they will not be equal to this insult offered to Christ, if you consider the infinite dignity of His Person. Compare therewith all those vexations which befall you in Religion, especially such as touch your honour; you will find them far less. Blush therefore for refusing to suffer trifling things for Christ's sake.

[14] St. John x. 23. [15] St. John x. 31.

4. Consider why the Jews wished to stone Christ—"Because," they said, "Thou being a Man makest Thyself God;" that is, they ascribed pride, vainglory, and a sham dignity to our Lord. Oh, how many times you imitate the Jews, either condemning your innocent neighbours, as imperfect, or not esteeming them as much as they deserve! Lest you do this, search into the reasons against such conduct, and resolve to see and honour Christ in any one whomsoever, considering such a one to be more worthy than yourself in all things.

SATURDAY.

On the Blessed Virgin—Deposuit Potentes.

1. Consider these words of the Blessed Virgin—"He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble." This putting down was displayed in the proud Angels, in Saul, in Nabuchodonozar, in Luther, and the exaltation in David, in the Apostles, and in so many Saints, whom God drew from a humble condition into power, or from a bad life into sanctity. Guard therefore against arrogance of soul, and vainglory, and exercise yourself in acts of humility that so you may be drawn, not to high offices, but to a place very near to Christ in Heaven.

2. Consider these other words of the Blessed Virgin—"He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." This is often perceived in many poor, who are enriched by the gifts of God, and in the rich who fall

into poverty; and in another way, in those who hungering and thirsting after justice, that is after sanctity, are satisfied by being replenished therewith, while those who are swollen with pride and arrogance, and the tepidity which follows thereon, lose even that fervour which at first sprang up within them. Blessed are you if you truly hunger and thirst after justice, because fully deliberate sin cannot exist with such hunger and thirst, and the desired perfection is granted to such in due degree.

3. Consider these other words—"He hath received Israel His servant." And here think over the various means whereby God has deigned to receive His people in the Old and New Law, and you yourself, both in the world and in Religion, conferring on you various benefits, lest you should perish; and make such acts as a pious affection will suggest.

4. Consider that the first source of this reception is the mercy of God—"Being mindful of His mercy;" the second, a promise of helping us—"As He spoke to our fathers." Having pondered therefore on the infinite mercy of God, and His promises to Abraham and David, as well as on other facts regarding His help to us, as when He said to our blessed Father—"I will be favourable to you;" excite in your soul a great trust, and ardently beg that He may do to you and others "according to His word."

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

1. Consider the motives which you have, as the son of such an Order, for adhering to Christ with an invincible spirit, in the time of the persecution of Antichrist. These motives may be sought by reflecting on the duty of a servant, of a son, of a client, of a criminal towards Christ, Who is your Lord, Father, Benefactor, and Judge. Therefore, with an ardent soul offer yourself to your Lord, to guard His honour, if it be now attacked and injured by Antichrist.

2. Consider the great difficulties and temptations which there will be in the time of Antichrist, on which account great vigour of soul will be needful, lest the just should succumb to the power and snares of Antichrist. "There shall be then," says Christ, "great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved; but for the sake of the Elect those days shall be shortened."[1] Here conceive an ardent desire that the just who shall be alive at that time may firmly adhere to Christ; beg therefore from our Lord that nothing may be wanting to them; and you, as far as in you lies, offer yourself to Christ to take His part.

3. Consider how little constancy you are able to promise your Lord, which you see by considering how often you offend Him, how you avoid the slightest suffering, how often through human respect you

[1] St. Matt. xxiv. 21, 22.

are ashamed of following Christ, although nothing so grievous threatens you as the persecution of Antichrist. Be ashamed therefore, and beg of God not to keep you alive to so perilous a time, lest you desert Him.

4. Consider that the best help for adhering firmly to Christ is to do what He wills, to avoid what He forbids, to imitate His way of life, and to make use of the most Holy Eucharist. How then are you not full of Christ in all your actions, feeding as you do so often upon Christ? Why are not your words, thoughts, actions, redolent of Christ? Examine into the reasons, be ashamed, beg pardon, and amend.

MONDAY.

1. Consider how horrible it is to see the "abomination of desolation standing in the holy place;"[2] "standing where it ought not,"[3] which, mystically understood, happens if in a place consecrated to God there be found anything which God abominates, and which, like a thing forsaken, is utterly useless. This applies to all sins, yea, and to works which, though not bad, are nevertheless not meritorious, because they are not done for a supernatural end. See whether there be such works in you, be ashamed, and beg pardon.

2. Consider the reasons for which any sin, how slight soever, may truly be called an abomination in the sight of God. For it is more abominable than any sort of uncleanness, or ulcer. See therefore

[2] St. Matt. xxiv. 15. [3] St. Mark xiii. 14.

what an evil odour you have before God, when you approach Him stained at least with deliberate venial sins. Cleanse yourself thoroughly as soon as possible, and as far as you can, live free from them.

3. Consider what are the mountains, whereto our Lord orders those to fly who are in Judea. By Judea we may understand the world, by the mountains either the Religious state, or a more perfect rule of living in that state, or the assistance of the Saints. Again ponder on the reasons for which these deserve the name of mountains, and see how well suited they are to guard a man against the persecutions of Satan.

4. Consider how great an aversion we should have for the things of the world, lest the infernal Antichrist injure us. "He that is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house."[4] This they do whom a too great affection binds to their relations, or to the things of this world, or who pour themselves out too much in worldly occupations, going down to the world, as it were, in heart. See how it is with you; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

TUESDAY.

1. Consider that all heretics are Antichrists, according to the mystical interpretation of the Fathers. Bewail the great number who are thus seduced. Give thanks that you are not one of their number, especially if you have once been such; compassionate

[4] St. Matt. xxiv. 17.

these miserable men, pray for their conversion often and earnestly; and see with what stores of virtue and doctrine you should provide yourself, so as to be capable of bringing them to Christ.

2. Consider that men of the world are also Antichrists, who break the laws of Christ and live wickedly; and as the number of these is likewise great, excite similar sentiments in yourself, and and kindle in yourself the Apostolic zeal of Ignatius or Xavier for bringing all to Christ and to Christian holiness. Begin this even now as far as you can, especially by the example of an irreproachable life, and a more than ordinary guard of the senses, whereby even the wicked may be moved.

3. Consider also that they are Antichrists who persecute the servants of Christ, or draw them away from His service. Compassionate them, bewail from your heart that the cause of Christ is so unworthily treated by such men, and strive with zeal to draw to His service out of the world as many and as excellent subjects as possible, whether by example, or other lawful means; and give hearty thanks to our Lord for being drawn out of the world yourself.

4. Consider that they are domestic Antichrists, who oppose themselves to a life recommended by the doctrine and example of Christ; who, indeed, ridicule, or criticise, or shun those works of simple and religious piety, whether of modesty or devotion, or of the observance of mortification and of their rules, which works have pleased and do please Christ and His saints, and are conformable to the life and doctrine of Christ. This is a mischievous class of men. Compassionate such, take heed not to be one of them; and if you meet such, which God forbid,

turn from them as from the enemies of Christ, remembering these words of the Apostle—"If I yet please men I should not be the servant of Christ."[5]

WEDNESDAY.

1. Consider these words of Christ—"Woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days."[6] This spiritually applies to those who are attached with too great an affection to any thing or person, and who therefore cannot speedily escape from the attacks of Satan, but fall under them. We have a daily experience of this in persons who return to the world whether by command or by their own accord. Examine therefore whether you have brought forth as your offspring, pride, or disobedience, or love of comforts, or sensuality, or any other defect, and, if so, wean it, that is, try to put it away from you as soon as possible.

2. Consider these other words of Christ—"Pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath."[7] That is, at a time unsuited for flight. At such a time they fly from sin and the temptations of the devil, who reserve their victory for easy things, when the occasion for heroic acts has passed, and they also who at the time of death wish to change their lives. See if you are of this number, and take heed to your affairs.

3. Consider whether there be any, who after the manner of the followers of Antichrist, in order to turn you from the true Christ and His doctrine, not in

[5] Gal. i. 10. [6] St. Matt. xxiv. 19.
[7] St. Matt. xxiv. 20.

express words, but in such as are equivalent, show Christ, not where He should really be sought, but elsewhere—"Lo here is Christ, or there."[8] Such are they who withdraw you from the observance of your rules, who draw you to idle conversations, to high offices, to the shunning of mortifications; and who dissuade you from doing or avoiding those things which according to Christ's life and doctrine should be done and avoided. You will not find Christ under such direction, therefore seek Him according to the direction of your rules and Superiors.

4. Consider that even the good are often deceived by the wicked or by themselves, so as to deceive if possible even the Elect. Thus many reject things which they had embraced in their first fervour. Examine whether your words are conformable to those which you received when you were fervent, whether at the time of the annual retreat, or at any other time; and put away all that differs therefrom, having proposed to yourself for your rule of life, the life and teaching of Christ and His Saints.

THURSDAY.

1. Consider the terror at the Last Judgment of God, which the darkness will strike into us—"The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven."[9] For if now the darkness of the night causes fear, even without the dread of a present judgment, how much more will that greater darkness terrify; but they who are conscious of no sin not fully expiated, will not

[8] St. Matt. xxiv. 23. [9] St. Matt. xxiv. 29.

be afraid. See therefore what you should do now, while you have time for expiating sins, lest that darkness alarm you.

2. Consider the first reason for the appearance at the Judgment of the Cross of our Lord—"Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in Heaven;"[10] that then at least the cause of Christ's death may be mourned, namely, the sins of men and your own. Mourn them therefore as much as possible now, and be not without fear about sin forgiven;[11] for sins mourned over and expiated, the Cross will not be a terror, but a consolation.

3. Consider the second reason for the appearance of our Lord's Cross in judgment. The confusion of those luxurious servants of Christ, who have not expressed in their lives the love and imitation of the Cross, when they have either fled from, or borne with an ill-grace, accusations, reproaches, mean and laborious offices, contempt, calumnies, ridicule, discomfort of body, in food, in dress, habitation, and the like. Therefore take timely heed, that the sight of the Cross at that time may be joyful and not terrible to you.

4. Consider the third cause of the appearance of the Cross, namely, the consolations of the good servants of Christ, who will then see the fountain of all God's gifts, the merits of Christ completed in Heaven, and a certain way to Heaven open to them, by the love and imitation of the Cross and the Crucified. Burn then with a practical love of this Cross, and say with St. Andrew, "Hail, O good Cross!" &c.

[10] St. Matt. xxiv. 30. [11] Ecclus. v. 5.

FRIDAY.

1. Consider in these words of Christ discoursing on the Last Judgment—"Then shall all tribes of the earth mourn," [12] the cause of future tears, which may be—(1) Sins worthy of eternal punishment and not expiated; (2) sins expiated, but worthy of tears on account of the love of God; (3) the loss of many occasions of merit; (4) the multitude of the damned on account of sins not blotted out. Be moved by these reasons to an abundance of tears, if not of the eyes, at least of the will, and anticipate those last tears, that then you may not weep, but exult.

2. Consider the reasons why the last Judge of the world will be Christ in His Humanity, and strive to profit by each one of them.

3. Consider the happy lot of the Elect of God, whom the angels will then gather together, "from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them," [13] and see what you should have, not only to be one of the Elect, but to be certain of being one. For many are called, both to the Church and to the Religious state, who yet are not elected, but end like Lucifer or Judas. Therefore, while there is time, strive to make your calling and election sure, providing yourself with those things which are great signs of the Elect of God.

4. Consider the reasons why certain great servants of God, who had never been great sinners, or if they

[12] St. Matt. xxiv. 30. [13] St. Matt. xxiv. 31.

had been, had done long and bitter penance, nevertheless greatly feared the Day of Judgment, while others similar to them in their lives, feared it not, but passed with great joy out of this life. And having reflected on yourself, strive so to live that you may be as well prepared as possible for that tremendous Day.

SATURDAY.

1. Consider the first affection which you should excite in yourself towards the Blessed Virgin, namely; joy in her gifts—(1) Her three-fold personal gifts; of *nature*, whereby she gave birth to Christ our Lord, of *grace*, whereby she superseded all the Saints; of *glory*, whereby she is most near to God; (2) joy in the gifts which by her prayers and merits she confers on men; (3) joy in her manifold worship throughout the whole world. Think of all this with pious affection, and elicit many sentiments of congratulation and joy.

2. Consider the second affection which you should excite in yourself towards the Blessed Virgin, namely, an imitation of her virtues, especially of these—(1) Chastity, for she would not be the Mother of Jesus Christ until she understood that it would leave her virginal chastity untouched; (2) humility, for although she was nobler than any mere creature, yet in her interior judgment, by her words and acts of humiliation, she showed the most profound humility; (3) poverty, for even at the time of childbirth she chose a most incommodious abode, destined for beasts and not for men; (4) for although about to

bring forth the Son of God, she left her home to obey the decree of Cæsar Augustus; and so for other virtues.

3. Consider the third affection which you owe to the Blessed Virgin, namely, thanksgiving for benefits, either general or peculiar to yourself, received from your Lord through this Virgin.

4. Consider the fourth affection which you should cherish in yourself towards the Blessed Virgin, namely, supplication, commending to this most powerful and tender Mother all necessities, both those that are common to you with others, and such as are peculiar to yourself.

PART II.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEASTS OF OUR LORD, THE BLESSED VIRGIN, AND THE SAINTS.

FEASTS OF OUR LORD.

FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

See page 58.

THE AGONY OF OUR LORD.

Friday after Septuagesima Sunday.

See page 171.

COMMEMORATION OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

Friday after Sexagesima Sunday.

See page 222.

The points 1, 3, and 4 of this meditation are most suitable to the present day, if the word "death" be changed into "Passion."

* THE CROWN OF THORNS.

Friday after Quinquagesima Sunday.

1. Consider how the soldiers contrived a new invention for shamefully and cruelly torturing Christ. It was not enough for His love to endure ordinary sufferings, but the pains with which men always

* Meditations thus indicated are taken from some approved author.

seek the means of indulging their desires needed to be convicted and repressed by the extraordinary sufferings of Christ. To this end the soldiers who scourged Christ, called together their troop as spectators, that the mockery might be the greater.

2. Consider the soldiers platting a crown of thorns and putting it on His Head. Is it thus, O Lord, that Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour? Is it thus that in the Kingdom of Christ there are no other crowns but such as pierce? Go and look at your King, in the diadem wherewith you have crowned Him. You have crowned yourself with roses, have you left for Jesus only the thorns? You have pierced His Head with your thoughts and with your judgments. Acknowledge this, and bewail it; compassionate your Jesus, and hear Him saying to you: I acknowledge not a luxurious member under a Head crowned with thorns.

3. Consider the crown woven of sharpest thorns, deeply pressed into the Divine Head of Christ, torturing it most grievously, and a reed in place of a sceptre given to Him, as to one ambitious of dominion; so that both the Flesh was tormented by the sting of the thorns, and His Soul afflicted by the token of an evil ambition. Wherein, besides the great sufferings of Christ's Soul and Body, think upon His love, which omitted nothing that could be suffered for your sake. Burn therefore with a love of your King, Who distributes eternal crowns to the Saints in Heaven, and testify your love towards Him by enduring willingly in future, for His sake alone, all those things which may trouble you in body and mind, and especially in your self-esteem; whether labours, or duties, or words, or the deeds of others.

COMMEMORATION OF THE SACRED LANCE AND NAILS.

Friday after the First Sunday in Lent.

1. Consider, when they saw that Christ was dead, how one of the soldiers opened His Side with a lance, either as an insult, or to discover whether He was dead. The inanimate Body felt not the pain; but His Mother felt it, herein "filling up those things that were wanting of the sufferings of Christ."[1]

2. Consider that Christ would have His Heart thus transfixed for the remission of sins, because the sins which proceed from the heart are those which defile a man; but from Christ's Heart life proceeds. Let such be your heart.

3. Consider that Christ our Lord, as it were, poured forth His Heart Itself, to testify the charity which had made Him suffer so much. "Thou hast wounded My Heart, My sister, My spouse, thou hast wounded My Heart."[2] (1) You have wounded Me with love, because I have loved you immensely. (2) You have wounded Me with a lance that My Heart and My love might be made open to you. Do Thou in return, O God, wound my heart with Thy charity, that I may worthily love Thee, and introduce me into Thy Heart as into a furnace of charity, wherein I may be totally consumed.

4. Consider how blood and water poured forth (1) to signify the power of Christ's death, through which we are cleansed from our sins in water, and the virtue of His Blood, whereby the ardour of depraved desires is extinguished in us, and as from

[1] Coloss. i. 24. [2] Cant. iv. 9.

the rock struck in the desert there flowed a copious supply of water to revive the children of Israel, so it is here. Wherein are fulfilled these words—"You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."[3] (2) To signify the power of the Sacraments derived from Christ's Blood; for by water we are regenerated into new creatures, and in the Eucharist water is mixed with wine. (3) To signify that as Eve was formed from the side of Adam when asleep, so the Church was formed out of Christ when asleep in death.

THE HOLY WINDING SHEET.

Friday after the Second Sunday in Lent.

See page 223.

THE FIVE WOUNDS OF OUR LORD.

Friday after the Third Sunday in Lent.

1. Consider Christ bearing His Cross, a Cross so heavy that it was needful to call Simeon the Cyrenean to carry it after Him. Consider that they restored His own clothes to Him after they had taken away the purple robe, that so He might be better recognized and receive greater confusion. Thus your Lord allows nothing to be omitted which may increase the grief and affliction of His Body and Soul. And you, how you seek after light crosses, and shun the heavy ones! How often do you diminish them in order to suffer as little as possible! Is this to imitate Christ, Who says—"Whosoever does not carry his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple."[4]

[3] Isaias xii. 3. [4] St. Luke xiv. 27.

Be ashamed, and mourn over your blindness in diminishing those things whereby a glory that is eternal and past all understanding is prepared for you in Heaven.

2. Consider the five Wounds of Christ made by the nails and lance. Adore each one of them. Give thanks for a two-fold benefit—(1) That Christ endured so sharp a pain in the four Wounds of His Hands and Feet; (2) that He poured forth therefrom so precious a Blood as the price of your redemption. Mourn over your sins and those of others, and promise amendment.

3. Consider that these Wounds are a refuge for the irchins,[5] that is, for sinners, whose sins bristle like thorns; and are for the just a resting-place, and as it were a nest. "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly and be at rest? Lo, I have gone far off, flying away, and I abode in the wilderness."[6] "Arise, make haste, My love, and come, . . . in the clifts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall."[7] I will set up for myself three tabernacles: one in Thy Feet, considering Thy steps that I may know whither I must turn my steps towards eternal life; another in Thy Hands, considering Thy works for me; the third in Thy Side, that therein I may know the value of Thy love.

THE PRECIOUS BLOOD.

Friday after the Fourth Sunday in Lent, and First Sunday in July.

See page 182.

[5] Psalm ciii. 18.

[6] Psalm liv. 7.

[7] Cant. ii. 10, 14.

FINDING OF THE CROSS.

May 3.

See page 223.

* THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

Friday after the Octave of Corpus Christi.

1. Consider. Christ showing His Divine Heart pierced through with a lance, surrounded by flames and with a crown of thorns, over which stands the Cross, revealing the mystery of these signs. The Heart of Jesus embraces all men in the Eucharist with affection of a most ardent love. What does Christ there? He loves men. He loves, I say; ask to know no more. Love fixed Christ to the Cross; but love then accomplished the laws of justice: here it reigns alone. The Heart of Jesus loves sinners, moving their hearts by every means, and even terrifying them by threats, that so they may be bent to the influence of love. The Heart of Jesus loves even imperfect and tepid souls, for indeed He is ready at once to bestow on them light, strength, joy, and peace, provided that mourning over their defects and negligence, they seriously begin to return the love of their loving God. But how sweet, how strong, is the love of Jesus towards us, tell, O ye fervent souls! Tell of His frequent visits to you, of His sweet conversation, His delightful consolation, His most wonderful familiarity. You have wounded His Heart. For now He has not hidden you in His Face, as the Prophet said of you with so much praise, but in the depth of His Heart. Whoever

therefore you are, the Heart of Jesus loves you. Rejoice, give all the thanks and praise you can, for many times perhaps you have not shown your gratitude for so much love.

2. Consider what are the dispositions of men towards the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist? Behold how many know not that the Son of God descended so low for their sakes! What a multitude of heretics, turning away from the Eucharist, have refused faith to this great mystery of love. And among those who know Christ by faith in the Eucharist, how many do you find who crucify the Son of God again in themselves? How great is the levity and irreverence of many in the House of God. Turn now your eyes upon yourself, have not you too sometimes increased the sadness of your Saviour, and turned away from His Heart? And even now, what is your love towards Him? Hear Him speaking to His own, as formerly to the Apostles—"Will you also go away."[8] What a great iniquity, if you, consecrated to Christ by so many titles, bound by so many ties, should join yourself to His enemies. With what face can you bear this complaint of your most loving Saviour—"If My enemy had done this, I would verily have borne with it. . . . But thou, a man of one mind, . . . who didst take sweet-meats together with Me."

3. Consider what are the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus in the Eucharist, thus dishonoured by men? For He indeed is the Lamb dumb before His shearer. For if He pours Himself forth in complaints of us, they are from Him signs of the most tender love, for He Who cannot bear not to be loved, loves, and

[8] St. John vi. 68.

desires most earnestly to be loved. These are the words of Christ spoken formerly to the Blessed Margaret Mary—"This ingratitude of men is more painful to Me than all the sufferings of My Passion, and for this I grieve so bitterly, that if the love of men towards Me only responded to My love for them, I would account all I suffered as nothing, and would even willingly undertake greater things for them if it were possible. But this liberality and clemency finds in them a narrow and cold heart" (ponder especially and meditate on what follows), "and this it is that wounds My Heart the most sharply, to find Myself so little honoured by those who are consecrated to Me." Let these things, O devout soul, excite your grief; let them excite your fervour, and infuse into you a burning desire, and a firm will never to cause sadness or weariness again to the Heart of Jesus.

TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD.

August 6.

See page 496.

THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS.

September 14.

1. Consider these words of Christ—"Now is the judgment of the world,"[9] by which it is signified, that the state of this world is so depraved, that it may be said to be perpetually under the judgment of God, on account of the various and innumerable evils wherewith it abounds. Thank God for having

[9] St. John xii. 31.

delivered you from the secular state, and taken you into His own Court. But on the other hand take care so to live, that your life may not deserve to be accused before the tribunal of God and subjected to the severity of His judgment.

2. Consider these other words of Christ—"Now shall the prince of this world be cast out,"[10] and examine if the devil has any place in your soul. This you will know by three signs—(1) By your sins, if you commit them deliberately; (2) by grievous and importunate temptations; (3) by maxims contrary to the Religious life and to your Order in particular. Examine yourself therefore, and if you find anything that the devil has sown in your soul, cast it out, with all traces of it.

3. Consider also these words of Christ—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself."[11] And in these words ponder on the fruits of the Crucifixion of Christ, Who by His Cross, merits, and example, should draw us all to Himself, making us partakers of His merits and imitators of His example. See therefore whether you act as they act, who are full of the merits of Christ, and as they who imitate Christ crucified by their mortification, and strive to be like them.

4. Consider again these words of Christ—"Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not;"[12] and think that these words are said to yourself, whom the Lord enlightens interiorly in many ways, by Angels, by men, by reading, by examples, &c., that so you may turn away from imperfection, spend yourself in good works, and do

[10] St. John xii. 31.

[11] St. John xii. 32. [12] St. John xii. 35.

your ordinary actions perfectly. See therefore whether you use this Divine light to your profit, cut off what is not right, and show yourself obedient to Divine lights.

FEAST OF OUR HOLY REDEEMER.

October 23.

See page 277.

FEASTS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

* ESPOUSALS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

January 23.

1. Consider that God willed His future Mother to be espoused to a husband. The Virgin abhorred it not, nor feared for her vow, because she had entirely given herself to the direction of God. She doubted not that she would be preserved inviolate by Him Whose will she was obeying. Suffer yourself to be directed by God, and you will incur no danger. Examine into the past, and make resolutions for the future.

2. Consider the causes of the Espousals—(1) Lest she should, when with child, incur disgrace among men: take care of the good name of others, and especially of your mother, Religion; (2) lest the Child Himself, born of an unmarried mother, should be held for illegitimate: take care also of your own good name, when it is more for the glory of God to do so; (3) that for a time the mystery of the Incarnation should be concealed: learn to conceal the bringing forth of your own good deeds.

3. Consider the qualities of the Spouse; he was indeed sprung from a royal race, but poor and a carpenter; nevertheless he was just, and a virgin, so that he might guard a virgin. What different

things are esteemed by God and by the world! God esteems justice, sanctity, virginity, humility; the world, exalted birth, riches, &c. If you practically judged things like God, you would not cleave so much to earthly things. Now at least correct your judgment.

PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

February 2.

1. Consider the wonderful humility and obedience of the Blessed Virgin, who, like any very humble and ordinary mother, having given birth to Christ, remained for forty days according to the law of Moses, touching no holy thing, and entering not the sanctuary till the days of her purification were accomplished. Ponder on this humility and obedidience, whereto she was not bound. Taste with an interior relish the sweetness of these virtues, examine the causes thereof, and compare therewith your pride, vainglory and disobedience; be ashamed, and purpose amendment.

2. Consider the interior occupations of the Blessed Virgin during the forty days of her purification, and think of the state of her mind; how joyful she was, how little she cared for the opinion of men, who thought that she had brought forth the Child Jesus as an ordinary mother; and try to profit by each thought.

3. Consider the oblation of the Child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem, after the days of the purification of the Blessed Virgin. See, namely, how it was performed by the Blessed Virgin, how by the Child Jesus Himself; with what pleasure it was

received by God the Father and the holy Angels. Offer yourself in union with this oblation, with all you have of good or evil; the former, that it may be strengthened and increased; the latter, that it may be eradicated. Offer also the Child Jesus Himself for these ends, as an odour of sweetness to our Lord, that by Him you may receive an ample benediction from Heaven.

4. Consider why our Lord required as an offering after the days of the purification, either a lamb of one year old as a holocaust, and a young pigeon or a turtle dove as a sin offering; or if there could not be a lamb, as in the case of the Blessed Virgin, on account of her poverty, two turtle doves or two young pigeons, the one as a holocaust, the one for sin. Having piously discovered the reasons, gather thence some spiritual fruit.

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* SEVEN DOLOURS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Friday in Passion Week.

1. Consider the greatness of the grief, yea, the sword which transpierced the soul of the Blessed Virgin, when she heard that Jesus was set as a sign to be contradicted, when she carried Him into Egypt, when she lost Him at the age of twelve years in Jerusalem, when she met Him carrying His Cross, when He was fastened to the Cross, when pierced with a lance He was taken from the Cross and laid in the lap of the Blessed Virgin, and finally taken from her and placed in the Sepulchre. Compassionate the Mother of Sorrows, beg pardon from her for having caused her sorrows—*Fac me vere tecum flere.*

2. Consider why God suffered His most innocent Mother to be tortured by so much sorrow; it was in truth that the Mother might be as like as possible to her Son, that she might deserve extraordinary crowns in Heaven, and that she might be given us as an example to imitate in suffering.

3. Consider the virtues of the Blessed Virgin: unshaken patience, most perfect resignation, heroic generosity, a most tender love towards God, and finally an admirable spirit of religion, whereby she sacrificed to the Divine glory a Son infinitely dearer than her own life. Admire these exalted virtues in the Queen of Martyrs. Beg her to obtain for you from her Beloved an abundant grace to profit by her example, and to imitate her virtues, whenever you are called by the Divine Redeemer to a share in His humiliations and sufferings.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

March 25.

1. Consider the wonderful liberality of the most Holy Trinity, the fruit of Their infinite goodness and love towards the human race, how in order to our full redemption from the slavery of sin and the devil, one of the Divine Persons was appointed to this work by the assuming of human nature. Admire this great Divine beneficence, praise and give thanks from the bottom of your heart; practically consider what you should offer to your God, proportionate to so great a liberality, out of your grateful heart, and offer it.

2. Consider the embassy of the holy Angel to the Blessed Virgin, for the accomplishment of this work;

consider his exterior, his posture, his manner of speaking to the Blessed Virgin, and lastly all his words and the interior sentiments which animated them. "Hail!" he says, "full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women. Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His Name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee."[1] Gather from all this some pious affection towards God, and towards the Mother of God, and some instructions for the reformation of your life, especially pondering on these words—"Hail! full of grace, thou hast found grace with God. He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever."

3. Consider the humility and fear wherewith the Blessed Virgin received the Angel. "She was troubled at this saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be." Behold! she would not consent to the announcement of the Angel of God, lest anything should interfere with her vow of virginity. Finally, having understood that the Conception and Birth were to be after a most sacred and extraordinary manner, she gave her consent with the deepest humility. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me

[1] St. Luke. i.

according to Thy word." Strive to profit by all these considerations.

4. Consider how our Lord Jesus, after these words of Mary, became instantly Incarnate in her womb. Wherein think with what affection the Word of the Eternal Father veiled Himself in our flesh, with what affection the Blessed Soul of Christ, beginning from that time to see God clearly, began also to adore and love the Eternal Father; with what ardour He offered Himself to undergo all miseries, sorrows, persecutions, stripes, calumnies, and death itself for your sake. Admire this, salute your dear Guest and wonderful Benefactor; thank Him for your redemption begun, pray Him to accomplish it; when accomplished, to apply it to you effectually; when applied, to preserve it abundantly until your death; and see how you should cooperate with Christ your Redeemer, for He will not redeem you without yourself.

FEAST OF OUR LADY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

May 24.

See page 295.

VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

July 2.

1. Consider the humility of Mary, who being made the Mother of God, and being raised to the highest dignity after Christ, went to visit Elizabeth. Examine whether such humility displays itself in your actions. How often do you refuse in a spirit of pride to go where you should go?

2. Consider the haste of the Blessed Virgin to go to St. Elizabeth—"She went into the hill country with haste."[2] He who gives quickly gives twice. Imitate this in the service of God; see whether you do so; and excite yourself to fervour in spiritual progress.

3. Consider the salutation of the Blessed Virgin to Elizabeth, how, although the more worthy, she gave the first greeting, which, "when Elizabeth heard, the infant leaped in her womb, and she was filled with the Holy Ghost."[3] Ponder on all this, and apply it to the instruction of your life.

4. Consider the words of Elizabeth to the Blessed Virgin—"Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things were accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." Ponder on all these words, and strive to profit by them.

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* OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

July 16.

1. Consider that one clothed with the sacred habit of Carmel is as it were, by his own law, bound to contempt of the world. For, in presenting to you a garment of mean material and dark colour, the Blessed Virgin seems to cry out to you—"Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. . . . For the world, and the concupiscence thereof, passeth away."[4] Let therefore the world be cruci-

[2] St. Luke i. 39. [3] St. Luke i. 41.
[4] 1 St. John ii. 15, 17.

fied to you, and you to the world, namely, to the riches of the world, the pleasures of the world, the judgments of the world. The riches of the world. Having food wherewith to be covered, let us be therewith content, "for they that will become rich fall into temptation and into the snares of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires which drown men into destruction and perdition."[5] But you, O man of God, O servant of Mary, fly these things.

2. Consider the honours of the world. "The attire of the body of the man shows what he is."[6] Why therefore a proud heart under an humble garment? In the same words wherewith Christ formerly spoke to His Apostles, Mary speaks to us —"You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord over them, and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister, and he that will be first among you shall be your servant."[7]

3. Consider the pleasures of the world. For this sacred garment is called the garment of salvation, because it exhorts us earnestly to submit to penitential works. "For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die, but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh you shall live."[8] "For the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."[9]

4. Consider the judgment of the world. Whilst the greater part of men tremble with fear where

[5] 1 Tim. vi. 9. [6] Ecclus. xix. 27.
[7] St. Matt. xx. 25, 26, 27.
[8] Romans viii. 13. [9] St. Matt. xi. 12.

there is no fear, and fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul, the associate of Mount Carmel, putting on his habit in presence of the Mother of God, says with St. Paul—"To me it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man's day."[10] Is not Mary better to me than ten, or even thousands upon thousands of men.

HUMILITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

July 17.

See page 460.

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

August 15.

1. Consider the disposition of soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary when near death towards men, towards God, towards her own conscience, and see whether you have cause to hope for proportionate peace and joy in that last hour. From this consideration follows that the obstacles thereto should now be removed by you, and the means thereto acquired.

2. Consider the holy affections of Christ's disciples, who stood by the death-bed of the Blessed Virgin; think that you are present with them, and excite in yourself similar affections.

3. Consider the departure of the Blessed Virgin's soul from her body, how it went straight to Heaven, without any hindrance of Purgatory, and with a great company of Angels and Saints; and see what you should do to go in a similar manner to Heaven.

4. Consider how the Blessed Virgin was received

[10] 1 Cor. iv. 3.

into Heaven, and placed upon a throne of glory. Examine at the same time into the causes of so much glory, and beg the Blessed Virgin to make you as like as possible to herself, for the greater glory and consolation of God, and the greater exaltation of the merits of His Son.

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* THE MOST PURE HEART OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption.

1. Consider how God, "Who hath made the hearts of every one,"[11] brought out the riches of His Wisdom and Goodness in creating the Heart of Mary. "There great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised."[12] The flowing river makes glad this city of our God. For to this fair Virgin the Heavenly Father gave the heart of a daughter, who would hear and incline her ear, and forget her people, and her father's house, and cleave wholly to her Father and Creator alone; the Word gave the heart of a mother who should bring forth Christ yet more fruitfully in the heart than in the flesh; the Holy Spirit gave the heart of a spouse, whereon He might descend with all His tenderness.[13] To you also God has given the spirit of adoption of sons, that you should be called and be the sons of God. Where is your love towards so tender a Father? "Whosoever," says Christ, "shall do the will of My Father, . . . he is My Mother."[14] Do you not reject this dignity? How many times does the Holy Spirit whisper to you—"Open to Me, My sister, My

[11] Psalm xxxiii. 15.
[12] Psalm lxvii.
[13] St. Augustine, *De Sanct. Virg.* cap. 3.
[14] St. Matt. xii. 50.

love, My dove;"[15] return, "and I will espouse thee to Me for ever, and I will espouse thee to Me. . . . in mercy and in commiserations,"[16] and you harden your heart?

2. Consider that the Heart of Mary is the heart of a mother towards men. Before the Divine Victim was offered on the Cross, Mary burned indeed with a most ardent charity towards men, inasmuch as she was His Mother, but how did this love increase when she stood by the Cross. The words of Christ in dying—"Behold thy Son!"—seized upon her heart with incredible force, to implant therein that maternal love which she was to display towards Christians—"For the Word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than a two-edged sword, and reaching unto the division of the soul and spirit, of the joints also, and of the marrow."[17] Would that those other words of Thine, O Jesus—"Behold Thy Mother!"—might imprint in our heart a filial love towards Mary. Let us then love this heart, no less amiable than loving, and mindful of these words—"Forget not the groanings of thy mother,"[18] let us fix well in our minds the many and great sorrows wherein she bore us. Let us promote her worship by every power and work of ours, but first of all let us represent her virtues in ourselves by imitation. By these words, spoken of old by St. Paul to the Philippians, does Mary urge us on—"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever modest, whatsoever just, whatsoever holy, whatsoever lovely, whatsoever of good fame, if there be any virtue, if any praise of discipline, think on these things. The things which you have both

[15] Cant. v. 2. [16] Osee xi. 19.
[17] Heb. iv. 12. [18] Eccles. vii. 29.

learned and received, and heard, and seen in me, these do ye, and the God of peace shall be with you."[19]

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

September 8.

1. Consider how the most Blessed Mary was present to the mind of God, both before her nativity and from all eternity. She was present in a threefold manner—(1) Inasmuch as in the sight of God no mere creature was ever so perfect and so beautiful as was the Blessed Virgin; (2) no mere creature was destined to such great things as the Blessed Virgin; (3) God never contemplated from eternity the coming of any creature with so great a satisfaction, as He did the coming of the Blessed Virgin. Therefore be glad and rejoice, give thanks to our Lord God, and think how lovely a thing it is to please God, to be an object of gratification to God, to be the cause of joy to the Heart of your God. Desire this, beg it from God, and try to remove all the obstacles thereto.

2. Consider the state of the Blessed Virgin in the world before her nativity, inasmuch, namely, as in the womb of her mother she was free from original sin, being prevented by the grace of God. Herein recognize and admire the goodness of God, Who, without any merit of hers, conferred such a benefit on her. Desire similar grace from God; that looking not for those merits which by your own strength you cannot have, He may fill you with His gifts; and

[19] Philip. iv. 8, 9.

commend this to the Blessed Virgin, that she may obtain it for you.

3. Consider the nativity itself. How far more excellent it was than that of any mere creature, as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, John the Baptist, and other Saints; reflecting on those things wherein the Blessed Virgin surpassed them at her birth, and gather from each consideration some spiritual fruit.

4. Consider what gifts you, on your part, should offer to the Blessed Virgin at her birth, or what you should ask from her for your own necessities, and those of others; offer the former, beg for the latter and, together with the new-born Virgin, offering your oblations and petitions, present them to the most Holy Trinity, to their greater glory.

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* FEAST OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin.

1. Consider that the name of Mary signifies "illuminator." For she gave to the world the Sun of Justice, which was to disperse the darkness of sin. And Mary obtains for us by her intercession the light of grace, whereby we walk as "children of the light." Rejoice at the dawn of so bright a day; pray to her trustingly, that she may obtain for you the light of grace, whereby you may be able to emerge from the darkness of sin, and walk honestly in the day.

2. Consider that the name of Mary signifies "mistress." She is our mistress; reverence her then as such, and render her the obedience due to such a Queen. Take heed that you suffer nothing in the least unbecoming a faithful subject.

3. Consider that the name of Mary signifies a "bitter sea." For she, more than any one in the whole world, was made partaker of the sufferings and hardships of her Son. Christ honours us, where He makes us "companions of His sufferings." Let us accept them with a grateful mind, and in bearing them let us imitate the patience, generosity, and resignation of the Mother of Sorrows.

COMMEMORATION OF THE SEVEN DOLOURS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Third Sunday of September.

See page 573.

FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY.

First Sunday of October.

1. Consider with what words the Angel saluted the Blessed Virgin in that greatest of all affairs and mysteries, the Incarnation of the Word. For the name of Virgin he speaks not, out of reverence, and yet he pronounces a title far more honourable—"Hail, full of grace." Full, that is, of all power, full of every kind of grace, full above all Angels and Saints. Congratulate the Blessed Virgin on this fulness, and pray her to make you a partaker according to your measure of so many graces.

2. Consider that our Lord is with the Blessed Virgin, not only by essence and omnipotence, as in every creature, not only by ordinary grace, as in all the just, but by a most special grace, by the closest love and union with her, by a most singular protection and guardianship, by a continual direction of

the faculties and actions of the Blessed Virgin through all her life. Let us strive by the grace of God so to live that God may be with us specially and continuously.

3. Consider for what reason she is said to be blessed amongst women. For the Blessed Virgin alone was exempt from all the malediction of sin, and the penalties of sin, namely, sterility, the pains of childbirth, evil concupiscence, &c. Yea, as Eve was the source of all malediction, so was Mary the source of all benediction. Therefore is she called blessed, and therefore is she blessed by all Angels, men, and by every creature; to these will I add my praises as long as I live, until I may praise Mary eternally in Heaven.

THE MATERNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Second Sunday of October.

See page 21.

THE PURITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Third Sunday of October.

See page 393.

THE PATRONAGE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Fourth Sunday of October.

See page 44.

PRESENTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

November 21.

1. Consider why the Blessed Virgin was presented by her pious parents to the Lord—that she might serve Him in His Temple; and gather from the thought some holy reflections.

2. Consider the age of the Blessed Virgin at her Presentation. She was three years old. And here in like manner examine why God would have her devoted to His service so early; and having thought of your own tardy conversion to Christ, beg pardon, and make amends for the delay.

3. Consider with what affection of soul the most tender Virgin offered herself to the Lord what she displayed towards God in her Presentation, in mind, in word, and in gesture; and from everything gather something to imitate, which may cause you shame, and lead to amendment of life.

4. Consider how the Blessed Virgin lived in a dwelling close to the Temple after her Presentation, how she behaved in things relating to God, how in her speech, how in her works with others; and having reflected on yourself, and made various resolutions for the amendment of your life, beg of her to obtain for you a persevering and efficacious will of presenting yourself at last to your Lord as a good and faithful servant, to fulfil exactly the things enjoined upon you by Him, in His Name, and by His ministers.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

December 8.

1. Consider the wonderful Providence of God, Who permits the most holy persons to be tried by many judgments of men contrary to their good name, no doubt for great ends, and such as tend to His greater glory; and thus He has permitted holy and learned men to believe that the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in original sin. Let this example encourage you under the evil judgments of men, when you give no occasion for them; and desire them, having called to mind the motives for such a desire, that so you may conform yourself to your most holy Mother.

2. Consider the power of original sin, which would have infected even the soul of the Mother of God, had she not been preserved from it by His special grace. Pondering on the magnitude of this benefit, congratulate the Blessed Virgin, give thanks to the most high God, humble yourself before His most holy Majesty, because the beginning of your life was in enmity with God; and thank Him that that He suffered you not to die without Baptism, of which numberless souls are deprived, and without which they will never see God in bliss, unless they be helped by martyrdom or other means.

3. Consider the beauty and purity of the Blessed Virgin's soul when it was joined to that little body, sprung from sanctifying grace. You will see the beauty of this grace both from the evils which it excludes and the good which it bestows, as well as by

comparison with all other things which men love and long for. By this consideration, excite in yourself the desire of keeping your soul as pure as possible, and of seeking the means thereto.

4. Consider the sentiments of all the Divine Persons, and of the holy Angels in Heaven, in beholding the soul of the Blessed Virgin not yet born; think with what supreme pleasure, with what delight and approval, they looked upon it. Arouse in yourself similar affections towards the Blessed Virgin; pay her profound veneration, as one full of so many gifts of grace from the moment of her conception, and having reflected on the uncleanness of your own soul, be ashamed, beg pardon, and implore her aid, that you may be cleansed as quickly and as thoroughly as possible, and may appear most perfect in the eyes of God.

EXPECTATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

December 18.

1. Consider how supremely the Blessed Virgin desired to bring forth Him Whom she had conceived; for she knew that He was given for the salvation of all, that He might begin the work openly. She desired, indeed, to have Him united to her in her womb, but desire for the salvation of others prevailed. How many times do you conceive God by good resolutions! How rarely do you bring Him forth! These are to be persisted in, otherwise they are useless. Put away sometimes even your spiritual consolation to help the salvation of others; and much more put away the consolation of the senses. In this way God is not lost, but brought forth.

2. Consider that the Blessed Virgin, knowing that it was the will of God that Christ should be born, desired His birth, that she might wait upon Him even with bodily homage, that she might see Him, embrace Him, press Him to her, carry Him, and serve Him. Spend yourself for God, not only in affection, but also in external works.

3. Consider that the Blessed Virgin, prepared herself for this childbirth by the intensest acts of all virtues. Dispose yourself not by one virtue alone, nor by a tardy virtue, to bring forth God in you. It is necessary to all, in you to an heroic degree. What virtue have you? How many are wanting? Accustom yourself to heroic virtues, which demand a fervent and constant resolution.

FESTIVALS OF THE SAINTS.

* THE JAPANESE MARTYRS, S.J.

February 5.

1. Consider how by the grace of God, these three Japanese became fervent and holy Religious. They passed from the darkness of infidelity, first to the light of Christian faith, and afterwards to the Society of Jesus Christ, wherein by the exercise of exalted and heroic virtues, they prepared themselves for the Martyr's palm. Let their example influence us to follow after perfection, to which they happily attained in so short a space of time.

2. Consider that by the same grace of God they became Apostles of their countrymen. They preached Christ regardless of threats and persecution. In the squares, in the roads, in prison, on the cross itself, they announced the law of the Gospel to their people, and urged them on by the sanctity of their own lives. Let us not doubt of the immense fruit of our preaching, if our life answers thereto.

3. Consider how lastly, by the grace of God, they were crowned with martyrdom, the firstfruits of martyrdom in Japan. They received the sentence of death with courage, and endured ignominy and insults as they were led in a cart through the towns and villages of Japan. Having arrived at the place

of execution, they saluted the crosses with reverence, and met their death thereon with a Christian generosity, many heathens being converted to Christ by the sight. Let us pray to these Saints, to obtain from God the conversion of their people, and for us patience, zeal for souls, and all their other virtues.

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* ST. MATTHIAS, APOSTLE.

February 24.

1. Consider that the predecessor of Matthias in the Apostolate, was Judas, "the leader of them that apprehended Jesus."[1] Consider how, having lost a most exalted rank in the Church of God, he died a disgraceful death, and left his office to Matthias, for whom it was reserved by God. Fear therefore lest you too lose your place, and take heed to avoid those things which are wont to deprive men of their offices, and which begin by the neglect of little matters.

2. Consider in what manner Matthias was added to the Apostles. It was in the presence of many, and two candidates were proposed out of all this number, namely, Matthias himself, and Joseph Barsabas. Wherein think with what purity of sentiment, with what absence of all inordinate movements of favour or dislike the Apostles chose these and rejected others. Examine whether in judging of persons, their qualities and their actions, you are guided by your feelings, or by right reason; and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

3. Consider how different is God's choice from that of men; for God chose not Joseph surnamed

[1] Acts i. 16.

the Just, when he was proposed with Matthias, although doubtless he had obtained that surname from his great renown in virtue, but he chose Matthias, unadorned with any such title. Thus our Lord, Who knows the hearts of men, often esteems those most who are neglected by men. You therefore learn to regard Divine and not human judgments, to please them, to desire them with a holy ambition rather than human judgments. See if you do this, and try to make progress.

4. Consider you have received a benefit similar to the election of Matthias; for God has elected you to an Order most closely resembling the Apostolic life, leaving in the world so many who are better than you. Therefore praise the goodness of Divine charity towards you from the depth of your heart, and try to correspond to your vocation, by earnestly promoting your own perfection and that of others.

ST. GABRIEL, ARCHANGEL.

March 18.

See page 93.

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* ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

March 19, *and Third Sunday after Easter.*

1. Consider that St. Joseph was the happiest of men in the "choice of God." For he was made by God the spouse of the Blessed Virgin, and the legal father of the Saviour of the world, that he might serve Christ in the affair of all others the greatest and grandest, namely, the redemption of the world. Congratulate the Saint on so high a dignity, and on

the graces and heavenly gifts which were bestowed on him, to maintain the excellence of his office.

2. Consider that St. Joseph was the happiest of men during the "course of his life." For he spent it in the familiar and domestic intercourse of Jesus and Mary. From hence examples and the aids of grace were in store for him, to attain to a sanctity which could be surpassed by no other man. Take heed to profit by such great examples.

3. Consider that St. Joseph was the happiest of men at "the hour of death." For she, the Mother of God and his own spouse, was present to minister to him, to console him, and to give him courage; the Son of God, his own reputed Son, was present to fold him, when dying, in His arms, and to bid him be secure of his eternal salvation, whereof Jesus Himself was the author. Let us be devout to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph while we live, and they will make our deaths happy. Let us earnestly beg from St. Joseph this same grace, greater than all others. Let us say confidently—"O holy Joseph, thy Jesus, Who was once subject to thee on earth, will deny thee nothing in Heaven."

ST. ADELBERT, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

1. Consider the love of Christ, the good Shepherd, Who gave His life for His sheep. This you will measure by pondering on the excellence of Christ's Person; then on the life which He gave for His sheep; again, on the Spirit wherewith He gave it; and lastly, on the unworthiness of the sheep for whom He gave it. If therefore your Shepherd did this for your sake, what should not you, His

miserable little sheep, do and suffer for such a Shepherd? Why suffer so unwillingly? Why do so little?

2. Consider the qualities of a hireling, who, "when he seeth the wolf coming, leaveth the sheep and flieth."[2] If Christ reproaches the hireling for deserting the sheep, is it not worse to desert Christ the Shepherd, so lavish of His life? Is it not worse to desert Him at the sight, not of a wolf, but of a friend? They act thus, rather than grieve a friend, do what they should not do, or omit what they should do, thereby displeasing God. If you be such a one, give satisfaction to God, and cease to be such.

3. Consider the disposition of Christ's good sheep —"They shall hear My voice."[3] The voice of Christ is a two-fold voice; namely, precepts and counsels, which are partly described in the Scriptures and in the rules, and partly written by the finger of God in the heart, by interior inspirations. See whether and how you heed these voices of Christ; attend to them diligently, and show by your works you heard them.

4. Consider another disposition of Christ's sheep —"And Mine know Me." He who does not know some great man, does not honour him when present, hearkens not to his admonitions, refuses what he asks, and cares not for a long conversation with him. He who knows him does the opposite; and such was St. Adelbert. See if you be like him, and strive to be like him.

[2] St. John x. 12. [3] St. John x. 16.

SS. PHILIP AND JAMES, APOSTLES.

May 1.

1. Consider how our Lord has our peace of mind at heart; for He said —"Let not your heart be troubled."[4] For a disturbed heart shuts out much that is good, and brings forth much that is evil. Weigh this well; examine whether and why you are disturbed, and resolve on what you have to do.

2. Consider the vastness of Heaven—"In My Father's house there are many mansions,"[5] that is, various degrees of glory, greater and less, which are offered to us, and urged on us almost with importunity, by our Heavenly King. Oh! if high priestly dignities and lucrative offices were offered to a King's courtiers and pressed on them, how happy they would think themselves, how eagerly they would seize them, and not content with the lowest offices, they would aspire without delay to the highest. Blush at the example of worldly men, and excite yourself to the desire of great glory in Heaven, not so much for your own advantage, as for the glory and consolation of God, and the exaltation of Christ's merits, whence proceed all gifts of grace and glory.

3. Consider one of Christ's offices in Heaven—"I go to prepare a place for you," and in this office, the affection of Christ for us, His diligence in preparing a place for us, and His power in such a preparation. Admire the goodness of Christ towards His little worms and whelps, adore that Breast burning with so great a charity, thank Him with a most fervent

[4] St. John xiv. 27. [5] St. John xiv. 2.

affection, and see how eager you should be to bear for Him all evils, sin only excepted, and to do good works, that so you may in some manner correspond with His love towards you, and prepare yourself for the attainment of Heavenly bliss.

4. Consider the promise of a grace of Christ yet to follow—"If I shall prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you also may be." Oh! that the knowledge of this excess of Christ's love, would make you pay Him back with love, and cherish it always towards Him, that you may say truly with the Apostle Paul, "Neither death, nor life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor things present, nor things to come, . . . nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."[6]

ST. STANISLAUS, BISHOP AND MARTYR.

May 7.

1. Consider in the life of St. Stanislaus, before he was called to the Episcopate, these virtues: (1) After living at Gnesna, and at Paris, far from his parents, he returned home with his chastity untouched; (2) he showed himself an example of good works, pure morals and irreproachable words; (3) he lived so that his adversaries reverenced him, and had nothing to bring against him. Compare thy actions with his; compare thy great helps in Religion with his lesser helps in the world; be ashamed, and try to profit.

2. Consider his zeal in the Episcopate, for by no

[6] Rom. viii. 38, 39.

fear whatsoever, not even by the fear of death, was he deterred from preventing, and punishing with the sword of the Church, the crimes of the King himself. Ponder on this excellence of the love of God, which made him despise that human respect, for the sake of which you leave undone what you should do, and do what you should not do; and burn with a similar love of God, which will make you offend man rather than offend God.

3. Consider the good conscience of St. Stanislaus, and the causes which produced in him so firm a trust in God, that he offered to recall the dead to life, as witnesses to the truth of his words. See whether you have faith regarding the smaller thing you ask of God. See why you dare so little: put away the impediments, and try to acquire the opposite virtues.

4. Consider the fortitude of St. Stanislaus in enduring a cruel death, and the miracles of God in joining the dissevered portions of his body; and excite yourself by all these thoughts to the love of God and the imitation of this Saint.

ST. FRANCIS JEROME, CONFESSOR, S.J.

May 11.

1. Consider how the Blessed Francis prepared himself for working assiduously in the vineyard of the Lord. Reverenced already under the title of the Holy Priest, he enlisted in the Society of Jesus, and passed a year in the Novitiate, where he prepared himself for the work, which St. Dionysius calls the divinest of all Divine works, by silence, prayer, and menial duties, according to the example of Jesus hidden in the town of Nazareth, and spending forty

days in the desert. When the hour drew near for preaching and gathering the sodality together, he used to scourge himself to blood, and pray for a long time. And the words which he gave to the people were drawn from an attentive reading, or rather meditation, of the holy Fathers and the Sacred Scriptures. Do we take care that our heart grows warm in prayer, that so it may bring forth good words?

2. Consider how he acted in the care of souls—(1) As to time and place. Like Christ, he might say. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."[7] Recalled home more than once when engaged in preaching through the villages and towns, he went with alacrity to another place at the will of his Superior, to enter upon a work which appeared at the first glance of smaller importance. His most earnest wish was to go to Japan; but disappointed in this hope, he devoted himself with no less zeal to the assistance of souls. (2) As to men. Making himself all to all men, he yet cherished a peculiar love towards the poor. He was most anxious to promote the honour of the Priestly order and of the Religious state, and gave the exercises of St. Ignatius so frequently to the Clergy and to religious Communities, that he never ceased giving them during the whole course of the year, and not unfrequently to many Communities at the same time. (3) As to intention. When near his death, being asked by his Superior to console his brethren who stood round by mentioning some special benefit which he had received, "I think," he said, "that the principal grace bestowed on me by the bountiful Hand of God, was this, that

[7] St. John iv. 34.

throughout the whole course of my life I sought singly and constantly the glory of God, neither desiring nor keeping anything for myself." At our last hour, could we say with the same right as Blessed Francis—"There is laid up to me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just Judge will render to me,"[8] I have not sought my own glory, but the glory of Him Who sent me?

3. Consider with what success he laboured in the service of his neighbour. It was indeed wonderful, and almost incredible. In each year he gave the Exercises of St. Ignatius to at least four hundred notorious sinners, and recalled them to a better life, besides many whom he drew by other means out of the mire of their vices. It was observed that those whom he had brought back to their duty, were never again led away from it. If all the ministers of the living God were inflamed with the same zeal as St. Francis, although the labourers might be few, how ample would be the harvest!

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* ST. JOHN FRANCIS REGIS, CONFESSOR, S.J.

June 16.

1. Consider that St. Francis Regis was most truly called the Apostle of the Poor. He was moved by a three-fold consideration to devote himself to them with the greatest zeal and charity. For he found in the poor (1) many motives of compassion, (2) many grounds of consolation, (3) a large field of merits. The Saint used to say that the rich abound in bread and in the food of the Divine Word; while, on the contrary, the poor, through their want of bread, often

[8] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

perish with eternal hunger. So that these unhappy beings are equally destitute of the food of the body and of that of the soul. And can we be unmoved by this kind of spiritual indigence, even though perhaps we be not touched by their temporal evils?

2. Consider that generally speaking labours for the salvation of the poor bring more consolation. For we can act with them with more freedom, and they on their part listen to us with more docility, are usually less immersed in sins, and have fewer obstacles to virtue. It cost our Francis very little trouble to convert the common people. Let the rich fear and tremble in their state; let the poor recognize their happiness, let Apostolic men put the sincerity of their zeal to the proof. If they have this one purpose, to work in the field of our Lord, what hinders them from putting the scythe to a harvest so easy and so plentiful.

3. Finally, there is more merit to be gained by attending to the poor. Charity shown towards them is purer, there is less to be feared from self-love, for only a lively faith supports and encourages the labourer. It was an axiom of Francis, in labouring for the poor, "I make more profit with less peril." How many labourers are there who, apart from vain applause and the favour of the rich, bear away no reward for their labour. If we looked to our own advantage alone, we should have at heart the care of the poor more than that of any others.

ST. ALOYSIUS, CONFESSOR, S.J.

June 21.

1. Consider the unwearied labour that Aloysius went through to be enabled to abdicate his dominions, when his father was unwilling, and endeavoured to prevent him by every means. Consider how many serious difficulties he had to break through, both with the Emperor and others, for no other end than to become, for the glory of God, a member of the Society. Venerate that heart so full of God and free from worldly pride; thank him for his high esteem of the Society of Jesus; rejoice that you are called to the same, and that you abound with so many good things without difficulty; and see how you should prize your vocation, for which this Angel of God laboured so much. Return hearty thanks to God, for honouring the Society with so illustrious a member, illustrious not only in His own eyes, but in the eyes of all the world; and see how dear to our Lord is this Society, into which God sends such chosen members.

2. Consider with what holiness St. Aloysius lived in the world; he stained himself by no mortal sin, he felt no impure temptation of the flesh, he experienced even unwillingly no evil thought. And, nevertheless, so full of our Lord God, so dear to God, so unharmed by the world, he fled from the world. Learn to detest that world, from which you have perhaps carried away so many mortal wounds. Love in the first place, after God and His grace, your vocation; live according to its rules, weep bitterly for your sins committed in the world, and

strive by heroic acts of virtue during the whole remainder of your life to satisfy God for them, that where sin has abounded grace may superabound, for the greater glory of God.

3. Consider the various means whereby this most innocent Angel tormented his body while in the world. Venerate this virginal flesh, that mouth consecrated by Apostolic fasting, that hand which tormented his body with scourges, and see how you should, with the leave of your Superiors, take vengeance on your flesh, which has so many times spiritually tormented the Son of God.

4. Consider the life of St. Aloysius; with regard to his equals, irreproachable; with regard to God, ever immersed in Him by a seraphic union. Consider his soul, hardly stained by any small sin, full of the perpetual sacrifices of most fervent works, and like a divine tabernacle breathing out God from every part. Consider his body, defiled by no inordinate motion, no unbecoming gesture; consider his heart, never disturbed by any inordinate motions, filled with holy thoughts and desires, emitting to God a most grateful and unceasing odour of sweetness. Compare yourself with this model; be ashamed, bewail your stains, beg pardon; and determine how much you are bound to imitate him, for the pleasure and consolation of our Lord.

THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

June 24.

1. Consider the first privilege of St. John the Baptist, that he was conceived and born of a barren mother, a favour obtained from our Lord by the

prayers of his father, Zacharias, who was a holy man. God's aid appeared more clearly in him than in others born of fruitful parents, and without previous prayer. Thus those heroic works which have difficulty in their performance, are the more excellent and the more pleasing to our Lord. Try to perform such works, and offer them to God by St. John the Baptist.

2. Consider the second privilege of St. John the Baptist: his birth was announced by the Angel Gabriel to his father, and his name given. Men think a great deal of receiving honourable mention from their King; it is a greater thing to be named and foretold by an Angel. Congratulate St. John, desire a similar, nay, a greater happiness, namely, that you may be named with pleasure in the mind of God Himself. See whether you deserve this, and how you are seeking for it; and try to conciliate to yourself as far as possible the favour of God.

3. Consider the third privilege of St. John the Baptist: he was sanctified before his birth, yea, he was filled with the Holy Spirit while in his mother's womb. And you, compare your birth, and life, and sins, with the holiness of St. John; humble yourself, bewail the multitude of your sins, try at least now to be full of the Holy Spirit; and deliberate on the means for obtaining this.

4. Consider the fourth privilege of St. John the Baptist: this wonderful praise, "He shall be great before the Lord."[9] How splendid, how honourable, is this favour! Emulate it; think what it is in the sight of God; and for His greater pleasure try to be great yourself. Think what is necessary for this, and try to advance.

[9] St. Luke i. 15.

SS. PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES.

June 29.

1. Consider these words of Christ to His disciples, "Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?"[10] apply them to yourself, thinking what others may say of you, especially those who judge justly. If they say anything evil of you falsely, rejoice; thank God, pray for them. If they speak truly, try speedily to amend.

2. Consider the answer of the disciples, who although they knew that many evil things were spoken of Christ by the malicious, yet were silent regarding the evil, and mentioned only what was good—"Some John the Baptist, and others some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the Prophets."[11] Do you speak in this manner to those who question you; yea, to those who do not even question you? If you find anything deserving of sorrow and correction, be sorry and correct it, and never sow discord.

3. Consider St. Peter's testimony of Christ—"Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;"[12] and do you from the depth of your heart confess Christ, anathematizing all heresies opposed to His dignity and Faith. Give thanks both for yourself and others for the possession of the true Faith, and especially give thanks for those who have been converted from heresy to the Catholic faith. Pray for the conversion of many; strive that in your adoption of the Son of God, received by justifying

[10] St. Matt. xvi. 13. [11] St. Matt. xvi. 14.
[12] St. Matt. xvi. 16.

grace, you may ever grow more and more; and see that you obtain it.

4. Consider Christ's reward to St. Peter for his sincere confession—"Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it; and I will give to you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in Heaven." Think over the greatness of all those words; see how even to you the same benefits may be brought, and excite in yourself many holy sentiments towards Christ and towards St. Peter.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE.

July 22.

1. Consider the state of Magdalene before her conversion from sin, compare with it your state while yet in the world; and make acts of humility, sorrow for sin, and contrition.

2. Consider the fervour of Magdalene in openly detesting and bewailing her sins. She was not ashamed before men, she avoided not the banquet-room, she blushed not to kneel at Christ's Feet, to water them with her tears, as she stood behind Him, to anoint them, to wipe them with the hairs of her head, to kiss them. You who have followed her when going astray, imitate her when penitent, and practically deliberate how you should express by imitation those acts of Magdalene, acknowledging from the bottom of her soul the grievousness of her sins.

3. Consider the rash judgment of Simon the Pharisee—"This Man if He were a Prophet would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner."[18] As if indeed the Prophets ought to know everything, or as if all that they prophetically know, they are to show that they know. Here examine your own judgments; how often foolishly and rashly and in a manner injurious to others, you condemn learning, prudence, experience, judgment, talents, words, sermons, conversations, and virtue itself. See the perils which hence arise of injuring your own conscience, and the reputation of your neighbour, and if there be anything to correct, correct it.

4. Consider the most sweet Heart of our Lord Jesus absolving the sinner, and first of all praising her before the Pharisee, because those things which he did not offer she offered; washing His Feet with tears instead of water, wiping them with her hair, kissing them, and anointing them. Wherefore I say to thee—"Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much." And to her indeed—"Thy sins are forgiven thee, thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace." Congratulate St. Magdalene, desire and ardently beg from Christ the same happiness, which you shall obtain if you love Him fervently.

ST. JAMES, APOSTLE.

July 25.

1. Consider the petition made by the mother of the Apostles, James and John—"Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right Hand, the other

[18] St. Luke vii. 39.

on Thy left, in Thy Kingdom."[14] This is called by many an immoderate affection in that pious mother, but her maternal tenderness is her excuse. Burn you likewise with a holy desire of reaching as high a place as possible in Heaven, for the glory and pleasure of God, and for the confusion of the devil, that so you may the better worship and love God. Think by what means this may be obtained, and put your hand to the work.

2. Consider the answer of Christ—"You know not what you ask." Which answer applies both to those who then knew not how good it is to sit by the side of Christ our Lord, and to you who ask and desire many things that should not be sought. Examine into your desires regarding things, persons, places, occupations; apply them to your vocation as to a touchstone, a vocation which should be the imitation of Christ's poverty, patience, and humility, and cut off what needs to be removed.

3. Consider the way pointed out by Christ for obtaining a place at His side—"Can you drink of the chalice" (that is, suffer the Passion and death), "that I shall drink?" The way of the Cross is the way to a high place in Heaven. Examine whether you love the Cross, and why you should love and carry it; oppose all contrary affections in yourself, and help Christ our Lord to carry it, for to this end you have been adopted by Him into His sacred service.

4. Consider how St. James drank of this chalice, for he was the first of the Apostles who bore testimony to Jesus, shedding his blood in Jerusalem by decapitation. Compare with this chalice, and with

[14] St. Matt. xx. 21.

St. James' life full of toils and of sufferings, as he preached the faith of Christ in Judæa, Samaria, and Spain, your own sufferings and labours; how small, how almost nothing they are compared to his labours. And yet how often you groan under the weight of a straw. Offering yourself to martyrdom for the Faith, you cannot bear one little word with a calm mind; and often you lay upon yourself these very crosses by vain apprehensions of things which no one dreamt of. Correct these things, and conform yourself to the Apostolic life.

ST. IGNATIUS, CONFESSOR, S.J.

July 31.

1. Consider the sanctity of your Father while yet in the world before joining the priesthood, his perfect patience in great persecutions, his perseverance in propagating the worship of our Lord God, yielding to no opposition; his rare fervour in striving after perfection; his constant mortification of the flesh in food and dress; his indefatigable zeal for souls; his contempt of all honour and comfort; his purity of conscience, so great that not only he feared not death, but even in the thought of it he was absorbed by a holy delight. Examine whether you are such in the Religious state, and conform yourself to your holy Father.

2. Consider the chastity of mind and body, a chastity not less than angelic, which your holy Father demands of you. See if you have it, acknowledge what is wanting, and endeavour to obtain it.

3. Consider what poverty he wished you to embrace, namely, "That your food, clothing, and bed,

should be suited to the poor, and that of those things which are in the house, you should desire the meanest." See how it is with you, and determine on what you have to amend.

4. Consider what obedience he recommended to you, so that in everything, except sin, you should obey any one whomsoever in command, as though he were Christ our Lord; obey in deed and affection and conformity of judgment; not waiting for commands, but honouring the mere sign of your Superior's will as a command, which virtue he required as an essential mark, distinguishing the Society from other Orders. Consider what is your behaviour in this respect; if it be right, thank God; if wrong, humble yourself, beg pardon of God and your holy Father, implore his aid in this matter, and in the holy observance of all the rules of the Society.

ST. LAWRENCE, MARTYR.

August 10.

1. Consider why our Lord compares us to a grain of wheat, especially when it is sown and dies; and having applied spiritually to the soul the use of a grain of wheat, draw profit.

2. Consider this grave sentence of Christ—"He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal." [15] See whether you love or hate your life in this world, and see what you have to do in order to keep it unto life eternal.

3. Consider your obligation of following Christ—

[15] St. John xii. 25.

"If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me."[16] See what it is to follow Him, and wherein particularly this should be shown by you, that you may resolve what you have in future to do or to avoid.

4. Consider how St. Lawrence hated his life and followed Christ, and what reward he obtained in this and in the other life. Excite yourself by his example to an earnest imitation of Christ our Lord, especially in mortification of the flesh, and in patience under adversity, even to the contempt of death and reputation.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW, APOSTLE.

August 24.

1. Consider the posture of Christ's Body as He prayed, the disposition of His senses and limbs in that long prayer which He made before the election of St. Bartholomew to the Apostolate. Observe His behaviour in the use of His eyes, hands, tongue, mouth, and in the attitude of His whole Body, and gather hence necessary lessons for your own reformation in respect to your exterior behaviour in prayer.

2. Consider the interior state of Christ's Soul in prayer; think how He occupied His intellect while praying, with what attention, what thoughts, and regarding what objects; how, again, He occupied His will, with sentiments towards God the Father to Whom He was praying, and towards men for whom He was praying. Compare therewith the inward state of your prayer, and having perceived

[16] St. John xii. 26.

the great difference, try in future to conform yourself to Christ.

3. Consider the circumstances attending Christ's prayer—(1) He went out to pray on a mountain, in a place removed from the crowd; (2) He went not to that prayer alone, but, as St. Ambrose remarks, with three disciples; (3) He prayed in the night, at a quiet time, taking away some of the necessary time from sleep; (4) He prayed long, that is, the whole night. From all this gather necessary instruction for your own amendment.

4. Consider that Christ in prayer asked not for His own necessities, but for those of others; if therefore so long, and with so great fervour He prayed for others, how much more does it behove you to pray for your own many necessities. See if you do this, and amend.

On the Gospel of the same Festival.

August 25.

1. Consider why that prayer which Christ poured forth during the whole night was called "the prayer of God." He passed the whole night "in the prayer of God."[17] You will find the reason, if you consider that Christ Who prayed was God, and He to Whom He prayed was God, and that He composed so perfect a prayer that it deserved to be called "the prayer of God;" and that it was so agreeable to our Lord, and so much desired by Him, even in us, that for this alone it deserved the title beyond all others. Weigh well each of these points, and gather necessary instructions.

[17] St. Luke vi. 12.

2. Consider the occasion wherein Christ our Lord prayed so long, namely, the election of twelve persons to the Apostolate, whose office it was to gain men to our Lord God by the preaching of Evangelical doctrine and the administration of the Sacraments. The excellence of which office is declared by that long prayer of Christ; for as God could have granted Him, without previous prayer, all things which He asked from His Father in so long a one, He willed to offer it up, in order to show how excellent and exalted a thing it was. Whence with tender affection, gather these two lessons—(1) How dear to your Lord was your salvation, when He sought for ministers and helpers thereof with so much preparation and labour; (2) how much you owe to Christ, Who in calling you to Religion, has called you in His mercy to the office of the Apostles; and on both these grounds excite in yourself those affections towards our Lord which for gratitude's sake it is your duty to feel.

3. Consider that among the Apostles chosen after Christ's prayer was Judas the traitor; whence learn, and practically impress on your mind, never to condemn as bad and imperfect those actions from whence sometimes there follow evil consequences, or some abuses, or offences of men, or evil ends, or the like; which however must not be laid to their account, just as the evil ending of Judas proves not that Christ our Lord made a bad choice, or an insufficient prayer.

4. Consider why those who touched Christ were healed, you indeed not only touch Him, but even receive Him in the Eucharist, and that often; and yet you are not cured of those infirmities of the

soul which are more easily healed than diseases, whose cure is not placed in your own will. Gather hence in what things you should amend.

ST. MATTHEW, APOSTLE.

September 21.

1. Consider the wonderful election of Christ, whereby He gathered to Himself His Apostles, not from the flower of the world, but from its dregs. Thus to-day He elects St. Matthew sitting at the custom house. Admire the goodness of Christ, Who disdains not to surround Himself with helpers such as these, with no renown of blood, or office, or excellence of virtue. Hence conceive a great hope that you also may come into the number of Christ's beloved, in spite of your sins and multiplied unworthiness; pray nevertheless most earnestly that He Who chose into His own number the Jew who had not asked Him, may deign to join you, a Christian and Religious, to His dear ones.

2. Consider the efficacy of Christ's words, Who without long speeches or a repeated call, said at once to St. Matthew, "Follow Me, and he arose up and followed Him."[18] Here admire the efficacy of Divine grace, which accomplished so quickly a thing so difficult as the conversion of a man who aspired only after riches. On the other hand, inquire why you, having no such obstacles, yet follow not Christ, Who calls you to easier things. And having deplored your obstinacy, and as it were, contempt of Christ, show yourself obedient to Him, and follow exactly His precepts and interior counsels.

[18] St. Matt. ix. 9.

3. Consider the humility of St. Matthew, which, describing His conversion, he clearly shows; (1) for he gives his own name, which the other Evangelists do not, when they relate his conversion under the name of Levi, but he mentions both his name and profession, that so he might bring more humiliation on himself for Christ's sake; (2) he does not describe the banquet which he gave Christ in his house, and which is mentioned by the others, that so by the concealment of his gratitude, he may exercise humility. Compare these examples with your own actions; you will find that you hide the evil which should be made known, and with vanity display that good, if there be any, which should be hidden. Lastly, having given thanks to St. Matthew for entertaining our Lord Jesus at a banquet, purpose amendment in respect to your pride and vanity.

4. Consider those words, so full of consolation, which Christ addressed to the Pharisees, who murmured at Him for associating with sinners—"They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill."[19] Thank God, you sinner, for this great readiness of Christ to convert you, place yourself before Him, especially in Communion, earnestly pray Him to heal you, make known to Him your diseases (as to a most charitable physician), and beg for mercy.

ST. MICHAEL, ARCHANGEL.

September 29.

1. Consider these words of Christ when He called the child to Him in the midst of His disciples—"Amen I say to you, unless you be converted and

[19] St. Matt. ix. 12.

become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."[20] In these words examine the three grounds of praise in children—(1) They live without craft and guile; (2) they are pure; (3) they are docile and ready to perform what they are told. See if you be like them in those things which may recommend you to God; be ashamed, and amend.

2. Consider these other words of Christ—"Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the Kingdom of Heaven."[21] Examine therefore whether your thoughts, desires, interior dislikes, bitterness of soul, gestures, motions, words, acts, savour of this childlike innocence and humility, and correct what needs correction.

3. Consider how greatly to be avoided are scandals, whereon Christ pronounces so severe a sentence, "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come; but nevertheless woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh. And if thy hand or thy foot scandalize thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. It is better for thee to go into life maimed or lamed, than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee."[22] Examine therefore your actions, whether at home or abroad; see, do you give bad example? If therefore you find

[20] St. Matt. xviii. 3. [21] St. Matt. xviii. 4.
[22] St. Matt. ix. 6—9.

anything to amend, amend it, having considered the reasons for so doing.

4. Consider the dignity you have attained through the gift of God. For to you also applies this saying of Christ—"See that you despise not one of these little ones: for I say to you, that their Angels in Heaven always see the Face of My Father Who is in Heaven." Therefore thank your Lord for giving you such defenders and leaders, even those whom He has made the honourable associates of His Heavenly Courts. Admire the mercy of God, and return most humble thanks to the Angels, and especially to St. Michael, the Prince of the Angels, because being so excellent by nature, and so full of heavenly glory, they disdain not to be your patrons. On the other hand, see whether your actions be such as will not offend the Angels, such as show that you obey Angelic leading and direction. If you find anything to bewail, bewail it, amend what needs amendment, beg pardon of Christ Jesus, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the holy Angels, and promise them amendment in some definite points.

THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS.

October 2.

1. Consider the wonderful goodness of God, Who gives to all men, even the very worst, from their birth, and to the end of the world will give even to Antichrist himself, an Angel Guardian, whose office it is to withdraw from sin by various means him who is committed to his charge, to defend him from evils of mind and body, and to lead him to good. Weigh this goodness of God by three considerations

—(1) The excellence of the Angelic nature, which far surpasses human nature; (2) the multiplied unworthiness of men, both natural, arising from the defects of their nature, and moral, perpetually springing from so many sins; (3) the state of all the Angels in Heaven, constantly beholding the Face of God in supreme glory. Give the heartiest thanks to God and the holy Angels, and think how grateful you should be to them.

2. Consider the humility so to speak of the holy Angels, who surpassing you by gifts of nature, grace, and glory, yet disdain not to be "ministering spirits," as the Apostle says, "sent to minister for them," that is, to serve them, "who shall receive the inheritance of salvation."[23] Yea, even to serve them who make no account of it. For no other reason do the Angels so deeply humble themselves, than the will of God alone, Who demands this of them, and the love of us, whom they wish to see saved, free from all evil, and full of all good. See therefore whether you humble yourself to services as low in regard to yourself as the care of us is in regard to the Angels; whether you love others as purely as they love us; and conform your actions to their example.

3. Consider the three-fold means whereby the holy Angels guard you—(1) They help you by their prayers poured forth for you partly in Heaven and partly on earth; (2) They direct you by interior inspirations, which they cannot do when in Heaven, because they cannot act from afar; and existing thus within you, they represent to you various objects, whereby you may know what evil to avoid, and what good to do;

[23] Heb. i. 14.

(3) they exteriorly defend you, removing many evils and perils, or snatching you out of them, or withdrawing the evils themselves which threaten you. Wherefore having made most tender acts of thanksgiving for this three-fold guardianship, see what you should do to correspond to it.

4. Consider what are the feelings of your Angel in guarding you, whether, namely, you give him cause of joy, or, speaking after our fashion, of sorrow; and according to what you shall find, elicit suitable sentiments, either of thanksgiving or grief; having implored his pardon, promise him amendment, and earnestly commend to him yourself and all belonging to you.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA, CONFESSOR, S.J.

October 10.

1. Consider the mortification of St. Francis, the scion of a ducal family, from his youth; for in his tenth year he afflicted his body with disciplines, which mortifications he continued even at the Court and in his worldly business, where he led a pious and most exemplary life. Compare your life and youth with his life and mortification, and you will find them very different. Blush, mourn, and beg pardon for the past.

2. Consider what led him to this contempt of the world, and a desire of a more perfect state, namely, the sight of the corpse of the Empress. This spectacle led him to a perfect knowledge of himself and his own vileness, and struck him so deeply, that he began seriously to think of a more perfect state of life, until, free from all obstacles, he recognized

the will of God, and was admitted into the Society by our holy Father Ignatius, forsaking honours, dukedom, riches, and all the comforts of the world. See how often you have the opportunity to know yourself and the will of God, how often you have been unstable and wavered in your vocation, and how God has led you, though unworthy, into Religion. Thank Him for this goodness, purpose to be constant, and beg for help.

3. Consider how he behaved in Religion from his first entrance therein: he was as it were a shining light, which advanced and grew into the perfect day, especially in humility, signing himself in his letters by no other name than that of sinner, in self-contempt; consider his assiduous mortification of the flesh, senses, passions, and of his own judgment and will; how in obedience he was most exact, in poverty most perfect. Thank God Who has given us in him such an example; see how far you are removed from him in virtues, although bound to them as he was. Inquire into the means for obtaining them, and be firmly persuaded that without them you enjoy only the name of a Religious.

4. Consider the liberality of God with this Saint, Who regarding with a great glory his self-contempt, humility, and other virtues, during the brief space of this life, made his name known to all men in this world, and conferred on him after death, for a momentary and light tribulation, an eternal and immense weight of glory. See what you should suffer and do to attain that end. Aspire to the exercise of heroic virtues, if you desire to obtain great grace from God here and glory there, and thank God for adorning the Society with such a Saint.

SS. SIMON AND JUDE, APOSTLES.

October 28.

1. Consider the love of Christ our Lord for us, since He gave, not a counsel but a precept, in these distinct words—"These things I command you, that you love one another;"[24] that so He may the more effectually urge us to mutual charity. See how you are obeying this command of Christ, having called to mind those persons, for whom hitherto you have felt no inclination, that so you may see what is wanting of sincere affection, which should be shown especially towards those from whom you have suffered something.

2. Consider one cause of hatred which the servants of our Lord may desire; namely, lives which are unlike worldly lives, "Because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."[25] See if you be hated by the world, and for what reason; if on account of your irregular life, justly you suffer; but if indeed because, rather than displease God, you lead a life distasteful to the imperfect, then blessed are you, rejoice and exult, for this is to suffer for justice sake, and to conform yourself to Christ.

3. Consider these words of Christ—"The servant is not greater than his master."[26] And having thoroughly recognized this, resolve always, when it can be done without sin, to choose the worst things, in clothing, habitation, in the use of other things; in insults, reproaches, calumnies, and other injuries,

[24] St. John xv. 17. [25] St. John xv. 19.
[26] St. John xv. 20.

because the servant should not be in a better condition than his Master, especially when that Master has suffered all this with the greatest joy for your sake. By His example be excited to heroic victory over yourself in all things; in your pleasure, will, judgment, convenience, and particularly in matters against your honour, reputation, and the good opinion of others concerning you.

4. Consider that you have no motive for excusing your imperfections, after so many holy examples on the part of Christ; and that to you apply in a manner these His words—"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."[27] Having pondered on these words, try to show in these very things, and by your deeds, that you follow all that Christ our Lord taught by word and example.

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* BLESSED ALPHONSUS RODRIGUEZ, CONFESSOR, S.J.

October 30.

1. Consider that Blessed Alphonsus fully understood that in submitting to the yoke of the Religious life, he was bound to perfect obedience, that so he might be a true associate of Jesus, Who for us "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross."[28] The obedience of Alphonsus shone forth especially in three qualities. It was *universal*. It embraced all the rules, and every moment of his whole life. No delicacy of health was able to withdraw him from this earnest study of obedience. When confined to his bed by a serious illness, he yet never omitted to uncover his

[27] St. John xv. 22. [28] Philip. ii. 8.

head when the Priest came in, that he might satisfy the rule. Nor did the burden and weakness of age cause him to ask for the smallest dispensation, but he preferred to rise from bed somewhat before the given signal, to betake himself with great difficulty to the exercises of the Community rather than be absent. Thus he fulfilled these words of Christ—"One jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled."[29]

2. Consider that the obedience of Blessed Alphonsus was *perfect*. He would have thought little of obeying the first known sign of his Superiors' will, unless he had entirely yielded up his own will and judgment also to their decision. He listened to his Superior's voice as to that of Christ. Hence that simple obedience which considered not whether what was ordered could be done or not; so that when he was ordered to go to India by his Superior, he immediately asked for the port, and to the question of the companion who was afterwards sent to call him back, as to how he intended to have crossed the sea, he answered—"If I had found a ship, I should have embarked directly; otherwise I should have tried to go into the sea." Let this example fill us with shame, who up to this day perhaps have not understood what is the obedience of the intellect.

3. Consider that the obedience of the Blessed Alphonsus was *heroic*. He always preferred this obedience (1) to reputation, for he preferred to be thought mad rather than to transgress any rule in the slightest degree; (2) to life, which he indeed put in peril, rather than refuse a prescribed remedy, which he had often known to be hurtful to him;

[29] St. Matt. v. 18.

(3) "to interior converse with God, and to the delights of His Divine Table;" for although he cared for both more than for his life, yet he refrained from them whenever his Superiors judged anything else to be useful to him. When therefore, following the humility of Christ, in constant obedience, he thus denied himself, and, so to speak, emptied himself out, what wonder if at last he was exalted, and if his name was venerable to Christians and terrible to the devils of hell?

ALL SAINTS.

November 1.

1. Consider the multiplied glory of the Saints in Heaven divided in various classes, whether angelic spirits or the spirits of the just, which glory they have from the clear and intuitive vision of our Lord as He is in Himself. Whence they are filled with every good suitable to their state, with supreme joy and pleasure, free from all sadness, weariness, anxiety, fear, labour, and any other trouble. You will see the greatness of this glory, both from these words of the Holy Spirit—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those that love Him,"[80] and from the infinite value of the works and merits of Christ's life and death, whereby He procured this glory for His Elect; and thus kindle in yourself an ardent desire of obtaining this glory.

2. Consider the facility for obtaining this glory, by the power of Christ's merits and the helps of His grace. For to each one who is in the grace of God,

[80] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

there is given a right to glory, of which right even God Himself cannot deprive you against your will; and the attainment of grace is as easy as is a good confession, and after that confession the preservation of grace by flight from sin, which again is easy by the grace of God, to him who has a good will. See therefore what is your behaviour in this respect, and prepare yourself for the glory open to you by the preservation of grace.

3. Consider the facility for obtaining a very high place and degree in heavenly glory, for which no other thing is needful to the just on his part than the habit of good works done for a supernatural end, freely, and without sin, for to the smallest of such works will correspond a certain portion of glory, whence you may increase *ad infinitum*, if you perform them *ad infinitum* in this life. Bewail therefore your blindness; when you can so easily be in a very high place and very near to God, by your own mere negligence you deprive yourself of so great a good.

4. Consider the multiplied necessity which entirely obliges you to this, that not in any manner whatsoever, but as a great and perfect servant of God, you should pass from this life to heavenly glory, possessing as you do many interior and exterior helps thereto, without any obstacles; or if there be any obstacles, they are such as may help you to an increase of glory and grace of God by taking them away or resisting them. On the other hand, consider what an imperfect and evil servant of God you are, how many secular women you will find in Heaven who in this life were more perfect in prayer, in the love and exercise of poverty, in the gift of chastity, in patience, and in purity of heart. Excite yourself,

therefore, to the desire of sanctity, deplore your blindness, and amend.

COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED.

November 2.

1. Consider the severity of the pains of Purgatory, comparing them with the interior trials of the soul and body, which multiplied diseases and other calamities inflict upon men in this life, and with all the torments which wicked men on account of their crimes, or Saints for virtue's sake, have ever suffered or may suffer, all of which are greatly surpassed by the very least pains of Purgatory. Moved by the thought of this severity, see how you should give yourself to good works for the poor souls there tormented, to deliver them from thence, and to preserve yourself from them.

2. Consider the facility for incurring the pains of Purgatory, to which men are rendered liable by the smallest venial sin unexpiated in this life. Look at your manner of life, and see how many such sins you commit, perhaps daily, which make you deserving of these so bitter pains of Purgatory. Now if you know yourself to have fallen into any crime deserving of death, how eagerly would you seek to escape the punishment? What would you not bear for a commutation of such punishment? Resolve upon the same for escaping the pains of Purgatory, far more severe than any human suffering.

3. Consider the means whereby you may escape the pains of Purgatory due to your sins, namely, by a great fervour of love towards God, and a great penitential satisfaction or maceration of soul and

body, which yet is much less than the severity of the pains of Purgatory. Gather together in one all your trials, suffered either in mind or body, and think how much lighter they are than the sufferings of Purgatory; yet by bearing the former patiently and willingly, you may entirely escape the latter. Think therefore how patiently you should in future bear your sufferings.

4. Consider in particular the trial which most frequently afflicts and disturbs you in Religion, and renders your life unquiet; think whether it be as great as would be for example the suffering of one in a burning furnace; doubtless it is not so great. Why therefore will you not bear your sufferings, although less than the sufferings of Purgatory? Oh, what a benefit it is to bear them, rather than endure the greater torments of Purgatory! Deplore, then, your sensuality, and prepare yourself for all the bitterness of this life, since it is far less than the pains of Purgatory.

OF THE HOLY MARTYRS OF THE CHURCH.

1. Consider that many of the Martyrs were at one time enemies to God, through want of faith or of a good life, but afterwards were converted by the goodness of God. Congratulate them, give thanks to God, and rouse yourself to a holy life, as one, who notwithstanding so many past sins, may be raised from the dunghill to sit among the Princes of the people of God; and to obtain this, secure the holy Martyrs for your intercessors.

2. Consider the motives which you have for increasing your hope of acquiring great holiness—

(1) The infinite goodness of God; (2) His love towards the human race; (3) the infinite merits of Christ, Who is your Head and your Brother; (4) the prayers of Christ and of the Blessed in Heaven; (5) the prayers and merits of so many of your brethren, whereof you are a partaker; (6) the means left by Christ for this end, both in Religion and in the Church. Only take heed that you be not wanting to yourself, and that you use these means.

3. Consider the severity of the various kinds of torments suffered by the holy Martyrs for Christ's sake. Thank them, and especially thank God, by Whose help they endured them. Compare all your trials with their sufferings, and be ashamed that you do not patiently suffer smaller things for Christ's sake.

4. Consider with what affection and reverence you honour their holy relics, which our Lord has given to this Church, to the end that His beloved may be honoured by you, and that you may supplicate their help. See therefore, what you should do in this matter.

ON THE DEDICATION OF CHURCHES.

1. Consider the first means whereby all the Churches dedicated to our Lord ought to be honoured, namely, by avoiding in them unclean actions, although lawful elsewhere. As therefore you are dedicated to your Lord in soul and body, see how entirely free you should be from all unlawful impurities. Be ashamed, deplore the sins whereby you often dishonour this temple, and seriously amend and keep

yourself pure, to please your Lord, Who dwells in you.

2. Consider the second means whereby all the Churches are honoured day and night, namely by the prayers and sacrifices offered to our Lord. See hence how you should perpetually, as far as in you lies, offer your actions to God and bring them forth for God, in such manner as to be a perpetual sacrifice, diffusing an odour of sweetness. See if you be such and endeavour to be such.

3. Consider the third means whereby all the Churches are honoured, namely, in the various ornaments, not of course profane but sacred, as sacred pictures and the like. Look at yourself, see what representations are harboured in you, whether in your eyes or in your other senses, and resolve on what is becoming in you, since the Apostle calls not only your soul, but also your limbs, the "temple of the Holy Spirit."

4. Consider the fourth means of honouring the churches, consisting in this, that the sacred furniture should not be converted to vain uses, out of reverence to God, to Whom it is consecrated. Why therefore do you occupy your tongue with conversations that are not sacred, your eyes with sights that are not necessary, and the like? Burn therefore, with an immense desire of making, by the help of God, your soul and body with all the powers, members, senses, and actions thereof, so pure and holy, that His Holy Spirit, yea, all the Divine Persons, may dwell in you with delight, and that the holy Angels, as the ministers and guardians of this temple, may willingly assist and keep away everything that is impure.

ST. MARTIN, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

November 11.

1. Consider the ease with which we may gain great favour with God, through works not great in themselves, but done with great fervour of love for God's sake. Such was the gift of a part of his garment to a poor man by St. Martin, of which Christ thought so much, that appearing to him He said—"Martin, as yet a catechumen has clothed Me with this garment." If therefore the almsgiving of an unbaptized youth was so agreeable to Christ, how much more agreeable will be the works of the just fervently performed. Admire the goodness of God, rejoice at the ease with which you may please Him, and excite yourself to the performance of good works for His sake.

2. Consider the love of the Religious life in St. Martin, who being made Bishop, lived in a most saintly manner with eighty Monks in a monastery which he had built. Examine into the reasons which urged him to live in such a manner and in such a place, and strive from each of them to excite yourself to a most tender and fervent love of your Religious vocation, pondering most deeply on its principal blessings, in a spirit of gratitude towards the Divine Majesty.

3. Consider the good conscience of St. Martin, "who neither feared to die," when near death, "nor refused to live," that he might honour God in His people. Consider what enabled him to feel so much security whether in life or death, and try with all your strength to obtain the same.

4. Consider his constancy in prayer, and his manner of prayer, for "with eyes and hand always raised to Heaven, he relaxed not his invincible spirit from prayer." And when his disciples urged him to rest by lying down, he answered, "Suffer me to look at Heaven rather than at earth, that my soul as it goes to the Lord, may be directed on its journey." Dwelling with deep inward relish on these pious sentiments of his mind, burn with the love of so good a soul, melting with this tender affection towards God, and reproaching your own disinclination to such things, blush before the Divine Majesty, beg pardon, and purpose amendment.

ST. STANISLAUS, CONFESSOR, S.J.

November 13.

1. Consider how St. Stanislaus observed the laws of God and of the Church, while in the world, and before he entered the Society; he never transgressed them indeed in any grievous matter. Compare your life with his, and having seen the great difference, humble yourself, bewail your sins, and with him for your intercessor beg pardon of them from the Lord. Think over and resolve on what you should do to appease your Lord, and to satisfy Him in Religion for so many and such great sins committed in the world.

2. Consider the manner of life of St. Stanislaus in the world, which you may learn by reading or hearing of his life: how he behaved in church, in school, in company, in conversation, in prayer, at table; and having reflected on your present manner of life in such places and on such occasions, acknow-

ledge how greatly he, while yet a secular, surpassed you who are a Religious. Blush therefore, and beg of him that you may so live in Religion, as he a secular lived in the world.

3. Consider the life of St. Stanislaus in the Society, how he observed his vows and rules, how in his fervour he added more than the rules of the Society prescribe. On the other hand, compare with his your own life in the Society, as to the observance of your vows, rules, and the inspirations which the Lord gives you, and see what you have to correct therein so as to please your Lord.

4. Consider the two-fold state of St. Stanislaus, one in the Church militant, the other in the Church triumphant. In the Church militant, think how he is everywhere in honour, even as a youth of nineteen years, and as Novice, who died out of his own country; and in the Church triumphant, think how full he is of riches, delights and honours. Congratulate him therefore on this two-fold happiness; thank the Lord as the author of both. Beg St. Stanislaus to obtain for you to live and die fervently and zealously in Religion, living according to its spirit, and accumulating for the glory of God as many merits and rewards as possible.

ST. CATHARINE, VIRGIN AND MARTYR.

November 25.

1. Consider the wonderful diligence of St. Catharine from her earliest youth, in the study of science and of faith, whereby she arrived in a short time to such perfection of holiness and learning, that at eighteen years of age she surpassed the most learned

men. At the same time consider what she contributed on her part to make so great a progress in so short a time, in sanctity of life and in learning; and having reflected on yourself, see what is wanting to you through your own fault, and try to imitate this Saint.

2. Consider the fortitude of St. Catharine, who despising the danger of death, went voluntarily to Maxentius, to reproach Him for his cruelty to the Christians, and to urge him to the faith of Christ, essential to salvation. Compare with this heroic fortitude your vain fear, when you dare not hinder the faults of others either by word or deed, but often even help them; even when by hindering them, you would incur no injury, but often great praise with God, and with those who judge rightly of things. Yet you would be a Martyr of Christ; yet you have come into Religion to promote the honour of Christ and to convert the world, you who dare not prevent the slight faults of those around you! Blush, and amend.

3. Consider the invincible patience of St. Catharine who neither by stripes, nor by rods, nor by eleven days' abstinence from food and drink, nor by the instrument of torture, armed with sharp swords, suffered herself to be torn away from the faith which she had given to Christ her Lord. Compare with these torments the sufferings which Christ sends through men in punishment of your sins; how slight they are, almost as nothing! And yet how often you either refuse them or bear them with an unwilling mind, offending Christ on account of them! Bewail therefore these your actions, and burn with an ardent desire of suffering in the House of God.

4. Consider the reward of St. Catharine's virtues, namely, the Martyr's crown, the burial of her body in Mount Sinai by the hands of Angels, and the glory of Heaven. See how well our Lord rewards things done and endured for Him! Ponder on these things, excite yourself to perform many good works for our Lord's sake, and to endure many evils with a tranquil mind; and to attain to this, pray earnestly to God.

ST. ANDREW, APOSTLE.

November 30.

1. Consider the wonderful judgments of God, Who called not to the Apostolate kings or princes, but men of low station, such as Andrew, casting his net into the sea. Having piously reflected on the reasons for this, excite in yourself a hope of Divine favour, to which your mean condition will be no obstacle, if notwithstanding you be willing to hearken to God, Who now has called you to the Apostolic life, for which give Him thanks, and pray for Apostolic works and perseverance.

2. Consider the end of the Apostolic life—"I will make you to be fishers of men."[31] See here the end of your devotion; examine whether you be truly seeking it; whether according to your means you strive to fish men to God; you can make no excuse of want of opportunity; for at home and in your chamber you have matter for fishing; if not another man, at least your own self. Rouse yourself therefore by various motives to this work.

3. Consider the prompt obedience of St. Andrew,

[31] St. Matt. iv. 19.

who at the first words of Christ, immediately followed Him; and examine how many words, both interior and exterior, Christ speaks to you through the mouth of another. Why therefore do you not hear Christ? On the other hand, consider how easily you listen to evil counsels both in word and example. Who would believe that a Religious, who knows that Christ is to be hearkened to rather than man, would yet more readily obey men, to his own loss, than Christ, Who gives a sure hope of reward! Pondering on these things, be ashamed, mourn, and amend.

4. Consider this most sweet address of St. Andrew to the cross whereon he went to Heaven—"Hail, O good cross, sought for unceasingly, and prepared at last for my longing soul! Receive me from men, and give me to my Master, that by you He may receive me, Who by you redeemed me!" Pondering on each of these words, according to the second or third method of prayer, you will elicit holy affections, and excite in yourself a desire of the cross, and a detestation of that spirit which would avoid it.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, CONFESSOR, S.J.

December 3.

1. Consider the age at which St. Francis Xavier was divinely called by means of our holy Father Ignatius to the exercise of a holy life; he was in the twenty-eighth year of his age. Hence you may conceive a hope that the time is not yet passed when you also, commencing a better life, may be able by the help of God to arrive at perfect sanctity; whether because you have left the world earlier than St. Xavier, or because if converted at a later period

to God, our Lord is able even in old age to adorn you with His gifts. Only you must resolve on these two things—(1) An efficacious will, an efficacious and fervent purpose of leading a holy life; (2) a continual cooperation with the helps of God, which are never wanting, and which consist in surmounting the obstacles to a holy life, and embracing the means which lead thereto. See if you have these two resolutions; if perhaps you have them not, begin to have them; implore the Divine assistance, and earnestly amend.

2. Consider two means employed by St. Xavier in the beginning of his conversion for the attainment of a holy life—(1) He strove with great force to subdue his rebellious flesh to the spirit, by the severity of scourges and hair shirts; (2) he studied to restrain the impetuosity of his soul by the habitual performance of humble duties, and by victory over himself in embracing those things which corrupt nature abhors. See how much these things conduce to progress in a holy life; examine whether you have them at heart, and resolve on what you have to do.

3. Consider the ordinary means which St. Xavier, like other servants of God, employed to seek great progress in sanctity, namely, a most diligent effort to attain continual union with God, which displayed itself in the exact and earnest accomplishment of all things belonging to the worship of God; as meditation, Mass, the Divine Office, the examination of conscience, together with a perpetual converse with the Divine Majesty, as far as his occupations allowed. Hence call to mind the various examples of these practices in his life, especially that ardour in prayer which made him unable to contain the abundant con-

solations which God poured into him, and which forced him to exclaim—"Enough, O Lord, enough," and having deplored your tepidity, aridity, and negligence, amend your life.

4. Consider the care of St. Xavier to avoid all things which would injure his spiritual progress, for although through his whole life he preserved an inviolable chastity, yet he was as fearful and cautious on that point as though he were much tried by evil passions. Hence, although so full of God's gifts, he examined his conscience often during the day, lest he should fall into the slightest fault. Compare your actions with his, and since they are so very different, see what interior and exterior caution you should use for the future.

ST. NICOLAS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR.

December 6.

1. Consider what Christ demands from you, when He compares Himself to a master travelling in a country far away from his servants, namely, that you should behave in His house as a good servant, who takes care that his lord on his return shall not find him unprepared. See if you be like this servant, and strive to be like him.

2. Consider the natural intrinsic talents given you for the spiritual acquisition of immense merits, that is, the members and senses of your body, and the powers of your soul. Examine how you have hitherto attended to this spiritual gain, and amend.

3. Consider that you have received from your Lord for your profit, not five talents only, but many more, in the Religious state and in your Order, both

those which are common to other Religious and those peculiar to your Order. Examine these one by one; consider what fruit you are gathering from them, and see what you should do, that when our Lord shall return in the Day of particular Judgment, He may not punish you, but place you over all His works to reign happy in Heaven.

4. Consider the common supernatural talents, both interior and exterior, divinely given you for your most abundant spiritual gain, namely, all the Sacraments, ceremonies, Indulgences, books, examples, government of Superiors, sermons, admonitions, and other helps of Divine grace, together with the supernatural habits of virtue and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. See if you use all these means as a good servant should.

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